A grammatical – historical critique of the pro-gay hermeneutic in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

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It all starts here ™

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ABSTRACT

Arguably, no ethical issue has dominated the recent cultural landscape more than that of homosexuality and same-sex unions. This one issue has been at the forefront of the moral horizon for the past twenty years and has not left the church unaffected. In the ongoing debate that surrounds this topic, the Bible figures prominently. The matter of what the Bible does or does not say regarding homosexuality serves as the flash point for the disputations that follow. Pro-gay advocates rightly acknowledge the role the Bible has played in western thinking regarding sexual ethics, and particularly homosexuality. Therefore, biblical discussions related to the promotion and normalization of homosexuality and same-sex unions are unavoidable.

Yet, what few realize is that it is not simply a matter of "the Bible says …" that will settle the debate one way of the other. At its core, the biblical controversy is first and foremost a matter of bibliology, as it relates to biblical inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures. For the interpreter's view on this one aspect of doctrine is primarily influential in determining the hermeneutic (method of interpretation) that will be used. The demise of biblical authority has prompted the rise of new methods of interpretation seeking to overturn long held interpretations on biblical passages related to homosexuality, like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

As it relates to homosexuality and the Bible, there are two hermeneutical systems that are employed to determine how the Bible addresses this most contentious issue. The first is the traditional grammatical-historical method of interpretation. This method seeks to uncover the biblical writer's originally intended meaning as it was received by the original audience i.e., the literal meaning. This includes examining the ancient culture, background, lexical and grammatical issues, comparing the discovered meaning of the text with the larger biblical framework, and then applying that meaning to the present setting of the interpreter.

The second method of interpretation is the new pro-gay hermeneutic. The pro-gay method is predicated on a more relativistically derived method of interpretation that begins with present-day culture. This method seeks to subjectively and philosophically interpret the pertinent biblical passages in light of prevailing culture. Thus, the hermeneutical horizon of the original author is exchanged for the interpreter's horizon, yielding a revised meaning of the text.

This hermeneutical dispute finds its Old Testament epicentre grounded in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Here, pro-gay proponents restrict the meaning of keywords like "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה) and the surrounding grammar and syntax through novel, but speculative humanistic theories and arguments from silence. Conversely, grammatical-historical practitioners find the time-

tested canons of a literal hermeneutic harvesting an enduring meaning from these texts — a meaning that resonates down through the ages to the present day.

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate this hermeneutical debate surrounding Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 from the time-honoured grammatical-historical perspective and, then, evaluate the hermeneutical and exegetical claims of pro-gay interpreters. The sum of these deliberations focuses on the question of which central authority should govern the interpreter's approach to these two Levitical texts — ***sola Scriptura*** or ***sola cultura***? That is the question this research seeks to answer.

In keeping with the purpose of this research, the following chapter summaries outline the development of this dissertation's purpose statement:

Chapter 1: An introduction to the stated hermeneutical problems surrounding Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is explained before the proposed solution is discussed. Then the proposed methodology for this dissertation is outlined and described.

Chapter 2: The primary pro-gay hermeneutical presuppositions are investigated and discussed in relationship to their unique approach to the lexical and grammatical elements of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Then a brief survey of the pro-gay hermeneutic in related Old Testament passages is presented before offering an analysis of how the pro-gay interpreters apply their restricted meaning of the Levitical texts.

Chapter 3: This chapter focuses on the crucial presuppositions of the grammatical-historical methodology, examining how they approach the contextual, background, lexical, and grammatical issues associated with Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Next, the literal interpreter's use of *analogia fidei* (comparing Scripture with Scripture) is presented related to the pertinent Old Testament texts associated with the Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (Gn 1-2; 19:1-11; Dt 22:5; 23:17-18; Jdg 19-20; Ezk 16:50).

Chapter 4: The nature, purpose, and place of the Mosaic law in the Old Testament is explained in its context before exploring its relationship to the New Covenant environment. A paradigmatic methodology for establishing the law's application in a New Testament economy is detailed and Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 tested to determine how these two laws are applied today.

Chapter 5: A survey of what Jesus, Paul, and Jude thought about homosexuality is explored (Mt 19:4-6; Mk 7:19-23; Rm 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Tm 1:9-10; Jude 7). This is explained by demonstrating the New Testament's moral continuity to the creation account, Mosaic law, and Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

Chapter 6: Built upon the meaning the grammatical-historical hermeneutic yields, the issues of applying Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are discussed. The rules for applying biblical meaning are outlined before practically demonstrating how the modern-day interpreter should apply these two Levitical texts in a 21st-century setting.

Chapter 7: The final chapter evaluates the pro-gay hermeneutical assumptions, exegesis, and application from Chapter 2 in light of the literal hermeneutic discussed in Chapters 3 to 6.

Conclusion: A final summary and the writer's conclusions are offered.

Key terms: Homosexuality, Hermeneutics, Pro-gay, Grammatical-Historical, Authorial Intent, Exegesis, Eisegesis, Assumptions, "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה), Application, Levitical, Mosaic Law, Creation Ordinance, Ritual Purity, and Moral Purity.

OPSOMMING

Daar is stellig geen etiese kwessie wat die onlangse kulturele landskap meer oorheers het as homoseksualiteit en huwelike tussen mense van dieselfde geslag nie. Hierdie enkele kwessie is vir die afgelope twintig jaar al op die voorgrond van die morele horison en het nie kerke onaangeraak gelaat nie. In die voortslepende debat rondom hierdie onderwerp speel die kerk ’n baie prominente rol. Dit wat die Bybel oor homoseksualiteit sê of nie sê nie, speel ’n belangrike rol in die akademiese debatvoering hieroor. Die voorstanders van die gay-beweging erken tereg die rol wat die Bybel in die verlede in Westerse denke met betrekking tot seksuele etiek, en in die besonder homoseksualiteit, gespeel het en steeds speel. Dit is juis om hierdie rede dat die bespreking van wat die Bybel mag sê oor homoseksualiteit en huwelike tussen persone van dieselfde geslag onvermydelik is.

Wat min mense egter besef, is dat dit nie bloot ’n geval is van “die Bybel sê…” wat die debat op die een of op die ander wyse tot rus sal bring nie. In wese is die polemiek oor wat die Bybel regtig sê, ’n kwessie van bibliologie, aangesien dit met die onfeilbaarheid van die Bybel en met die gesag van die Heilige Skrif verband hou. Die uitlêer/vertolker se siening van hierdie een aspek van die sistematiese teologie is deurslaggewend vir die bepaling van die hermeneutiek (interpreteringsmetode) wat gebruik sal word. Die ontkenning van die van die Bybel se gesag het aanleiding gegee tot die ontstaan van nuwe metodes wat daarop gemik is om interpretasies wat op Bybelgedeeltes gegrond is en wat baie lank ten opsigte van homoseksualiteit gegeld het, omver te werp. As voorbeeld van sodanige gedeeltes word daar na Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13 verwys.

Wat die Bybel en homoseksualiteit betref, is daar twee hermeneutiese stelsels wat gebruik word om te bepaal op welke wyse die Bybel hierdie uiters kontensieuse kwessie aanspreek. Die eerste is die tradisionele grammatikaal-historiese metode. Hierdie metode wil die bybelskrywer se oorspronklik-bedoelde betekenis blootlê soos die oorspronklike gehoor dit ontvang het – dit wil sê die letterlike betekenis. Dit sluit in die bestudering van die antieke kultuur, agtergrond, leksikale en grammatikale kwessies, die vergelyking van die ontdekte betekenis van die teks met die breër Bybelse raamwerk en die toepassing van daardie betekenis op die huidige situasie van die interpreteerder.

Die tweede interpreteringsmetode is die nuwe pro-gay hermeneutiek. Die pro-gay metode berus op ’n meer relativisties-afgeleide uitlegmetode wat die hedendaagse kultuur as vertrekpunt aanvaar. Hierdie metode probeer om toepaslike Bybelgedeeltes in die lig van die heersende kultuur op selfondervindelike en filosofiese wyse uit te lê. Sodoende word die hermeneutiese

horison van die oorspronklike skrywer vir die horison van die uitlêer verruil met ’n gevolglike hersiene betekenis van die teks.

Hierdie hermeneutiese dispuut vind sy Ou Testamentiese episentrum in Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13. Hier beperk pro-gay voorstanders die betekenis van sleutelwoorde soos “gruwel” (תּוֹעֵבָה) en die omringende grammatika en sintaksis by wyse van vreemde maar spekulatiewe humanistiese argumente en uit argumente e silentio. Omgekeerd, oordeel praktisyns van die grammatikaal-historiese metode die beginsels wat hulle onderskryf, die toets van die tyd deurstaan het, naamlik die hermeneutiese uitleg van die Skrif, ’n blywende betekenis vanuit hierdie teksgedeeltes, ’n betekenis wat deur die eeue heen weerklink tot op hierdie dag.

Die primêre doel van hierdie studie is om die hermeneutiese debat rondom Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13 te ondersoek en wel vanuit die bewese grammatikaal-historiese perspektief en om daarná die hermeneutiese en eksegetiese aansprake van pro-gay uitlêers te evalueer. Die somtotaal van hierdie oorwegings fokus op ’n enkele vraag, naamlik deur watter sentrale gesag die uitlêer tydens sy benadering tot hierdie twee teksgedeeltes uit Levitikus gerig moet word — sola Scriptura of sola cultura? Dit is die vraag wat hierdie navorsing graag wil beantwoord.

In ooreenstemming met die doel van hierdie navorsing, bied die volgende opsomming ’n oorsig van die verhandeling se doelstelling:

Hoofstuk 1: ’n Inleiding tot die hermeneutiese probleme rondom Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13 word verduidelik alvorens die voorgestelde oplossing bespreek word. Die voorgestelde metodologie vir hierdie verhandeling word dan uitgestippel en in hooftrekke beskryf.

Hoofstuk 2: Die vernaamste pro-gay hermeneutiese vooronderstellings word ondersoek en bespreek met betrekking tot hulle eiesoortige benadering tot die leksikale en grammatikale elemente van Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13. Daar volg dan ’n bondige oorsig van die pro-gay hermeneutiek in verwante Ou-Testamentiese skrifgedeeltes voordat daar ’n ontleding volg van die wyse waarop pro-gay uitlêers hulle beperkte en beperkende betekenis van die Levitikus-skrifgedeeltes toepas.

Hoofstuk 3: Hierdie hoofstuk fokus op die deurslaggewende vooronderstellings van die grammatikaal-historiese metodologie terwyl daar nagegaan word hoe hulle die kontekstuele, agtergrond-, leksikale en grammatikale kwessies wat met Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13 geassosieer word, benader. Vervolgens word die letterlike uitlêer se gebruik van die analogia fidei (die vergelyking van Skrif met Skrif) aangebied soos dit met die tersaaklike Ou-Testamentiese-

teksgedeeltes in Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13 verband hou (Genesis 1-2 en 19:1-11; Deuteronomium 22:5 en 23:17-18; Rigters 19-20 en Esegiël 16:50).

Hoofstuk 4: Die aard, doel en plek van die Mosaïese wet in die Ou Testament word in konteks verduidelik voordat die verband daarvan met die milieu van die Nuwe Verbond ondersoek word. ’n Paradigmatiese metodologie vir die bepaling van die wet se toepassing in ’n Nuwe-Testamentiese ekonomie word uiteengesit en Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13 word getoets om vas te stel hoe hierdie twee wette vandag toegepas word.

Hoofstuk 5: ’n Oorsig van wat Jesus, die apostel Paulus en Judas se standpunt oor homoseksualiteit was, word bestudeer (Mattheüs 19:4-6; Markus 7:19-23; Romeine 1:26-27; 1 Korinthiërs 6:9-11; 1 Timotheüs 1:9-10 en Judas 7). Dit word verduidelik deur die morele kontinuïteit van die Nuwe Testament met die skeppingsweergawe, Mosaïese wet en Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13 aan te toon.

Hoofstuk 6: Gegrond op die betekenis wat die grammatikaal-historiese hermeneutiek lewer, word die kwessies rondom die toepassing van Levitikus 18:22 en 20:13 bespreek. Die reëls vir die toepassing van Bybelse betekenis word uitgestippel alvorens daar prakties gedemonstreer word hoe die hedendaagse uitlêer hierdie twee Skrifgedeeltes in Levitikus in ’n 21ste eeuse opset moet toepas.

Hoofstuk 7: Die finale hoofstuk evalueer die pro-gay hermeneutiese uitgangspunte, uitleg en toepassing van hoofstuk 2 aan die hand van die letterlike hermeneutiek soos in hoofstuk 3 tot 6 bespreek.

Slotsom: ’n Finale opsomming en hierdie skrywer se gevolgtrekkings word aangebied.

Sleutelterme: Homoseksualiteit, Hermeneutiek, Pro-gay, Grammatikaal-histories, Skrywersbedoeling, Eksegese, Inlegkunde, Aannames, Gruwel (תּוֹעֵבָה), Toepassing, Levities(e), Mosaïese wet, Skeppingsordening, Rituele reinheid, Morele reinheid.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Books of the Old Testament

Gn Ex Lv Nm Dt Jos Jdg Rt 1 Sm 2 Sm 1 Ki 2 Ki 1 Chr 2 Chr Ezr Neh Es Job Ps Pr Ec Can Is Jr Lm Ezk Dn Hs Jl Am Ob Jnh Mi Nah Hab Zph Hg Zch Ml

Books of the New Testament

Mt Mk Lk Jn Ac Rm 1 Cor 2 Cor Gl Eph Phlp Col 1 Th 2 Th 1 Tm 2 Tm Tt Phlm Heb Ja 1 Pt 2 Pt 1 Jn 2 Jn 3 Jn Jude Rv

General

ANE	Ancient Near East(ern)
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (Alliance)
LXX	Septuagint
MAL	Middle Assyrian Law(s)
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament

Resources

BDAG	Arndt, W., Danker, F.W. & Bauer, W. 2000. A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature. 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
DBLSD	Swanson, J. 2001. A dictionary of biblical languages: Greek New Testament. 2nd ed. Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems.
HALOT	Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M. & Stamm, J.J. 1999. The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament. Leiden: Brill.
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical theological society
NIDNTTE	Silva, M., *ed*. 2014. New international dictionary of New Testament theology exegesis. Vol. 1–5. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
NIDOTTE	VanGemeren, W., *ed.* 1997. New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis. Vol. 1- 5. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
NIV	New international version

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and problem statement

1.1.1 Background

In the last forty years, the church at large has undergone a significant shift in its understanding of what the Bible says about homosexuality and same-sex marriage. The church's increasing approval of homosexuality[1] is primarily the result of a hermeneutical climate dominated by relativistic thinking[2] (Botha, 2005:7-27; Christopher, 2009:34-38; Larkin, 1988:18-19; Mohler, 2014:18). The abandoning of the grammatical-historical interpretation of the Bible has given way to some very unique and extremely creative interpretations of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.[3] These new interpretations depart substantially from the well-understood interpretations of the Levitical passages (18:22 and 20:13) for 2 000 years of Church history.

In relation to this general background, the present writer has become increasingly aware (Christopher, 2009:7-118) of the relativistic hermeneutical methods currently employed by many scholars and the culturally acceptable results these methods yield (Caron, 2009:42-45; Germond, 1997:188-196; Helminiak, 2004:29-41). Not only is homosexuality now justified, but it is also promoted in the sanctuary of some churches and denominations. This is illustrated by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa's endorsement of homosexuality and the Metropolitan Community Church's active promotion of gay theology (Botha, 2005:7-13).[4]

1.1.2 Problem statement

The pro-gay interpreters promote a new hermeneutic[5] that has current culture as its starting point (Nortje-Meyer, 2005:174-182; Punt, 2006a:419-431; Punt, 2006b:885-907; Van der Kooij,

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[1] The term "homosexuality" as it is used in this dissertation focuses on homosexual acts, but does not preclude the desires that accompany the same-sex behaviour. The Bible itself does not divorce the disposition from the associated actions (Mt 5:27-28; Rm 1:21-28). So, while the pertinent biblical passages often emphasize the homoerotic activity, this does not excuse the desires that accompany homosexual behaviour. Older English dictionaries acknowledge this integrated understanding of homosexuality that includes both the actions as well as the attitude — see *Webster's new collegiate dictionary* 1981:544.

[2] A crucial precondition to understanding the pro-gay hermeneutic is found in their evaluation of biblical authority. In two recent articles, Christopher (2010:35-39; 2014) evaluates the pro-gay assumptions related to biblical authority. He traces the foundational thinking which informs their diminished, and sometimes disparaging, assessment of the Bible as a verbally, plenarily inspired, and inerrant word from God. The sum of this pro-gay logic leads to the subordination of the Bible to the fallen reason of the interpreter.

[3] All Scriptural citations in this dissertation are from the New American standard Bible 1995 unless otherwise stated.

[4] See Peppler (2006:39-56) for an evangelical assessment of the events leading up to the legalizing of same-sex marriage in South Africa in December 2006.

[5] Caron is one pro-gay example that illustrates the prevailing thought of many pro-gay interpreters. Caron (2009:42) advocates a reader-response method of interpretation which incorporates the main tenets of the hermeneutical circle

2000:105-111). This approach enables interpreters to view the sexual proscriptions in the Levitical texts as historically conditioned and, therefore, time-bound (Bird, 2000:155; Mtshiselwa, 2010:778-780). Accordingly, passages like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are thought to be completely irrelevant for today's modern culture (Helminiak, 2004:56). In a noteworthy contrast, those committed to the task of a grammatical-historical hermeneutic begin with the text itself, not present-day culture. In so doing, grammatical-historical interpreters find the Old Testament moral proscriptions against homosexuality are applicable today (Gagnon, 2001:120-128).

A survey of the recent literature and research on this topic reveals that pro-gay interpreters universally appeal to the cultic nature and context of Leviticus (Bird, 2000:152-155; Nissinen, 1998:42-44; Via & Gagnon, 2003:5-9; Vines, 2014:85). Then, by deconstructing the moral implications of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, these same interpreters can further maintain that male-male intercourse has a very narrow definition which is controlled by issues of cultic purity.[6] Use of this logic means male-male encounters were simply a violation of cultic protocol that transgressed the mixing of kinds (Germond, 1997:218; Helminiak, 2004:53-54; Van der Kooij, 2001:253). This, they maintain, is no different than the sowing of two kinds of seed together or the mixing of fabric (Boyarin, 1995:342-344; Vines, 2014:76).

In order to lend credence to their claim, pro-gay interpreters[7] define the resulting "abomination" [8]תּוֹעֵבָה as a cultural taboo rendering the guilty parties ritually unclean (Stiebert and Walsh,

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of Liberation Theology: Caron (2009:42) maintains that the interpreter should use a hermeneutic of suspicion that will allow one to correct the Bible when the well-being of citizens requires it. Furthermore, Caron (2009:44) contends that the Bible no longer has a monopoly on truth and is not to be thought of as the final authority and arbiter on morality (Caron, 2009:42). In his summation of his view, Caron claims that the authority of the reader is a vital aspect of the hermeneutical process as he/she blends important social change into his/her hermeneutical methodology. For this reason, Caron (2009:44) vilifies the grammatical-historical view that seeks "a simple analysis of the biblical texts in their historical and literary context." In Caron's (2009:40) estimation, "… you can't have a reasonable discussion with proponents of the literal approach, so just bypass them." One of Caron's (2009:44) undergirding presuppositions driving his particular hermeneutical approach is related to what he believes are the "known scientific facts about sexual orientation." He never states what those "facts" are.

[6] Pro-gay interpreters often compare the moral impurity of homosexuality with the purity violations of Leviticus 11-15, as if a mere cleansing ritual with the designated waiting period would provide the cleansing necessary to approach the tabernacle with its manifestation of the presence of God. That there is a clear distinction between ritual purity on the one hand and moral purity on the other hand is avoided by pro-gay interpreters, although this distinction is evidenced in the penalties attached to such a violation — both the death penalty and *kareth* penalty. Gagnon (2012:53-65) marshals a compelling argument against the prevailing pro-gay logic on this front in his citation of Klawans' work (1997:1-16; 2000:22-34, 41-42; 2003:89-102).

[7] This is not to imply that pro-gay interpreters have a monolithic understanding of the meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and the use of "abomination". On the contrary, as will be seen in the next chapter, there are nuances to the pro-gay interpretation. Yet they all agree that the "abomination" spoken of in 18:22 and 20:13 is both time- and culture-bound.

2001:125) and jeopardizing forfeiture of the land as a result (Lv 18:24-30). Furthermore, it is maintained that the Levitcal conditions were unique to ancient Israel and its cultus. Hence, the male-male proscriptions have no validity in the 21st-century culture, as the two situations are mutually exclusive (Helminiak, 2004:55). Pro-gay interpreters conclude that the silence of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 concerning female-female intercourse is tacit endorsement of lesbianism due to the absence of male penetration (Helminiak, 2004:59-61; Nissinen, 1998:44).

Contrary to the pro-gay assertions, grammatical-historical interpreters view the sexual proscriptions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 through the lens of the creation ordinances of Genesis 1 and 2 (Gagnon, 2001:136-137; Greidanus, 1985:39-51; Kaiser, 1991:31, 118-119; Merrill, 1987:295-308; Ross, 2002:349). In this, God's creative work and order display things as he originally intended from the beginning, including gender distinction, heterosexual marriage and monogamy, and heterosexual intercourse (Gn 1:26-30; 2:18-24), all in a trilateral covenant commitment between God, the man, and the woman. The sexual proscriptions in Leviticus are entirely consistent with God's original design and intent. Therefore, arguments from silence promoting lesbianism are inconsistent with God's creational design of and pro-creational mandate for the heterosexual norm established from the beginning (Gagnon, 2001:142-145; 2012:53-65; Hamilton, 2014:38-39).

Additionally, grammatical-historical interpreters underscore the moral nature of the male-male prohibitions in Leviticus. In part, they attribute this to the lexical definition of the resulting "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה, which they define as something that is morally "detestable" (Kaiser, 1991:117) and "intrinsically evil" (Gagnon, 2001:120).

In light of the seriousness of the present debate, and given the few grammatical-historical responses to the numerous pro-gay advocates, there is an opportunity for another examination and evaluation of the hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methodologies offered by both sides. The result of such a study will further illuminate the pro-gay interpretation, while at the same time serving to further analyse and refine the grammatical-historical interpretation.

The two Levitical proscriptions against male-male penetration appear to be consistently maintained throughout Scripture, with an application for today. Correspondingly, the prohibition against female-female intercourse is strongly implied, based on the creational design of the male-female gender distinction/complementarian motif (Gn 1:26-28; 2:18-23) and the

[8] All Hebrew citations were taken from and compared to of Anderson and Forbes (2012) as well as both the Hebrew Bible s.a. and Hebrew Bible 2004 in the bibliography, unless otherwise stated.

heterosexual norm for marriage and sexuality. Based on this, this dissertation seeks to answer the question: How does one hermeneutically substantiate such a view?

Given the significant contrast between these two opposing views, the primary question to be asked is: How does one interpret the proscriptions against male-male intercourse and the corresponding silence about female-female intercourse in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13?

The contribution of this study, in answering the proposed question, will be to critically evaluate the hermeneutical presuppositions[9] and related exegetical methods used to interpret the proscriptions against male-male intercourse and the related silence about female-female intercourse in Leviticus. This approach will include an emphasis on both the immediate Levitical and the extended biblical context, lexical and syntactical significance, and the relationship of Levitical laws (like the proscription against male-male intercourse) to the rest of Scripture. Then the results of this study will be practically applied before evaluating the tenets of the pro-gay hermeneutic.

The related questions to this proposal will specifically address the following:

1. What hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methods do pro-gay interpreters use, and how should they be evaluated?

2. What hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methods guide grammatical-historical interpreters, and how should they be evaluated?

3. What are the predominant contextual themes (i.e., holiness, covenant, Levitical law, clean and unclean, purity, penalty, etc.…) and significant exegetical features in Leviticus that will aid in interpreting 18:22 and 20:13?

4. Can the interpreter span the gap between Mosaic law in the Old Testament and a New Covenant understanding of the Old Testament's distinctly theocratic prohibition of homosexuality? If so, how is such a bridge to be built?

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[9] There are a number of philosophical streams that feed into the pro-gay interpretation. For example, many, like Boyarin (1995:333-336) and Fredrickson (2000:198-199) credit the extensional philosophical promotions of Foucault in his *History of sexuality* whereby Foucault seeks to liberate sexuality from its moral foundation. In so doing, Foucault believes sexual prohibitions are a result of a negative social construct. Others, like Punt (2006b:887-889), are informed by feminist theologian Schüssler Fiorenza, who subscribes to a feminist and liberation theological hermeneutic which is governed by post-modern hermeneutical and cultural considerations.

5. In what way do these proscriptions against male-male intercourse (Lv 18:22 and 20:13) and the corresponding implications of female-female intercourse apply to the New Testament and beyond? How do they apply? Why do they apply?

6. If the Bible still proscribes homosexuality in all of its forms, how does this specifically and practically apply to the 21st-century Christian? What does a present-day application of this injunction look like in a culture that has accepted and normalized homosexuality?

7. Upon thorough examination, what is the final evaluation of the pro-gay hermeneutic? What implications does such a hermeneutical approach have for other sexual distortions delineated in Scripture?

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to pursue examination and evaluation of the pro-gay interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 founded upon the grammatical-historical hermeneutic.

Therefore, the particular objectives of this study are the following:

1. To examine and evaluate the hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methods of pro-gay interpreters' use of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

2. To examine and evaluate the hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methods of grammatical-historical interpreters' use of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

3. To analyse the predominant contextual themes and significant exegetical features of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 in both the immediate and extended contexts as it all relates to pro-gay assertions.

4. To demonstrate the reasons why both the Levitical proscription against male-male intercourse and the implied prohibition against female-female intercourse are maintained in the New Testament, and then to explain how this applies today.

5. To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the pro-gay hermeneutic, detailing why the grammatical-historical paradigm is to be preferred.

1.3 Central theological argument

The central theological argument of this study is that the pro-gay interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 fails to deal adequately with the biblical text, because it relies on a relativistic hermeneutic that begins and ends with contemporary culture.

1.4 Methodology

The approach used in this study is the literal, grammatical-historical hermeneutic that is in keeping with the Reformed perspective of *sola Scriptura.*

The research for this study will make use of both pro-gay and pro-literal sources taken primarily from books related to hermeneutics and homosexuality, essays, journal articles, various extracts from dictionaries and encyclopaedias, exegetical commentaries, Hebrew lexicons and grammars, Old Testament theologies, unpublished and published papers and theses, and volumes on Ancient Near Eastern culture and background. A summary of the various views from key biblical and theological scholars will be collated, examined, and then evaluated.

- In order to examine and evaluate the past and present pro-gay hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methods applied to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the key hermeneutical elements of representative scholars will be analysed and their views summarized and evaluated in conjunction with their exegetical claims (Bird, 2000:142-176; Boswell, 1981:91-117; Countryman, 1990:11-79; Germond, 1997:188-232; Helminiak, 2004:11-73; Stewart, 2006:75-104).

- In order to examine and evaluate the hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methods of pro-grammatical historical interpretations in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, valuable contributors (Davidson, 2007:133-175; Davidson, 2012a:5-52; DeYoung, 2000:29-68; Gagnon, 2001:111-146; Gane, 2009:309-317; White and Niell, 2002:11-25 and 53-108; Wold, 1998:7-25 and 91-158) will be analysed and their views summarized and then critiqued.

In an effort to interpret Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the predominant contextual themes and significant exegetical features will be thoroughly investigated and considered. In keeping with this, the following hermeneutical and exegetical aspects will be studied: The legal literary genre of Leviticus, various contextual themes — like purity and ritual — within and beyond Leviticus, the cultural background, lexical and grammatical indicators, and the right use of application will be investigated.

In order to demonstrate why the Levitical proscription against male-male intercourse and the implied prohibition against female-female intercourse are consistently maintained throughout the Bible and applied today, exegetical justification will be offered and explained. Based on an investigation of the relationship between Mosaic law and the New Testament, the prohibition against all same-sex homosexuality will be explored. This will be done by detailing how the

Mosaic law is transformed in a New Covenant setting through the finished work Christ (Ross, 2002:58-64; Wright, 2004:281-326). Then a survey the New Testament's view on these same-sex prohibitions and their relationship to Levitical law will be given before a modern-day application is offered.

Based on the foregoing research and study, the hermeneutical assumptions, exegetical methods, and culturally influenced interpretations of the pro-gay interpreters will be critically evaluated on the basis of the grammatical-historical approach (Christopher, 2009:28-42).

1.5 Provisional classification of chapters

1. Introduction

2. Hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methods of pro-gay interpreters in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 examined.

3. Hermeneutical assumptions and exegetical methods of grammatical-historical practitioners in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 examined.

4. Relating Old Testament meaning to a New Testament context: hermeneutical considerations for interpreting Old Testament sexual proscriptions, like homosexuality, in light of the New Testament.

5. The related contextual and exegetical evidence from the New Testament will be presented and its connection to the Levitical texts examined.

6. The link between hermeneutics and application will be discussed and the application process outlined before practically applying the meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 in the present-day context.

7. A review of the pro-gay position in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 with a grammatical-historical critique of their assumptions and ultimate conclusions.

8. Conclusion

2 HERMENEUTICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND EXEGETICAL METHODS OF PRO-GAY INTERPRETERS IN LEVITICUS 18:22 AND 20:13 EXAMINED

Whether acknowledged or not, all biblical interpreters harbour certain assumptions that affect their hermeneutical methodology. The assumptions interpreters employ influence the meaning they derive from the text being examined. Millard Erickson (1984:593-612) underscores and accurately illustrates the crucial interplay between the "nature of presuppositions" in relationship to the "nature" of the hermeneutical enterprise in an essay he wrote for the *International Council for Biblical Inerrancy Summit 2*. Imagine an airline pilot wrongly assuming the weight of his plane, the fuel load, wind speed, altitude, and air speed while depending on a very unreliable compass. Such a pilot would terminate his flight in a rather unexpected way in an unknown destination! Hence, the importance of beginning the hermeneutical process with valid assumptions is critical to arriving at the right destination.

The debate surrounding what the Bible has to say concerning homosexuality and same-sex acts certainly illustrates the importance of acknowledging and understanding what one's core assumptions are — theological, philosophical, cultural, and methodological — before approaching the hermeneutical task at hand. It is also critical to identify and assess the assumptions of those interpreters who come to a differing or conflicting conclusion. To this end, asking some foundational questions is helpful in revealing and defining the interpreter's presuppositions.

In answering the following set of assumptive questions, the interpreter will establish the hermeneutical basis from which the eventual interpretation and conclusion will be decided: To what degree is the Bible authoritative? What is the difference between revealed knowledge and discovered knowledge? How much weight should be placed upon recent scientific discoveries on the subject? To what degree should the interpreter interact with social-scientific assessments? Where should the interpreter begin the process: with the Bible or current culture? Does the meaning of a specific text reside solely with the original author, or does the reader bring meaning to the text? Is truth absolute or relative? These are but a few of the essential assumptive questions that, when answered, frame the debate while altering the hermeneutical trajectory before forming the final conclusions regarding the meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

In reality, one's essential assumptions help form the starting point that will shape both the direction and terminus of a particular thesis, like the one under consideration here: Those committed to the grammatical-historical hermeneutic normally begin with an *a priori* assumption

that acknowledges a high degree of biblical authority, while pro-gay hermeneuticians ascribe to an *a priori* assumption of sexual orientation. Thus, getting off to a right start is critical. This is most evident when dealing with biblical passages commonly referenced when dealing with the issue of homosexuality (Gn 1: 26-28; Gn 2:18-25; Gn 19:1-12; Lv 18:22; 20:13; Jdg 19-21; Rm 1:24-28; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Tm 1:9-10). Consequently, the interpreter's presuppositions about biblical authority, humanity, culture, science, and hermeneutics are certain to influence both one's interpretation and application of these important passages.

Why do the grammatical-historical (i.e., literal) methodology and the pro-gay hermeneutical paradigm end up poles apart? The more literal approach concludes same-sex acts are always sinful, while pro-gay scholarship contends that, under certain conditions, homosexuality is biblically permissible? What promotes such a disparity? To answer the question, the stated presuppositions of the interpreter must be taken into account: Those committed to the grammatical-historical perspective, armed with the presupposition of biblical authority, begin with Scripture and proceed to work from that vantage point (Wold, 1998:17-25). Much to the contrary, pro-gay interpreters find the genesis for their approach in current culture and perceived scientific determinations on the subject. So, among pro-gay interpreters there is a tendency to work from the present to the past — the Bible (Cleaver, 1995:10-11; Edwards, 1984:4-7). This is what Miller (1989:124) refers to as being "self-consciously aware of their social location". So there are two distinct starting lines, two contrasting authorities, aiming at two contrary finishing lines. On an issue of this magnitude, can both be right? Is there a third way yet to be discovered, or is this an either/or issue? Or is this simply a both/and matter?

The grammatical-historical approach concludes that homosexual acts of any sort are immoral, regardless of what science might or might not say (DeYoung, 2000:13-16, 142-143; 332; Mohler, 2008:63-73; White and Niell, 2002:17-23). In response, pro-gay interpreters conclude that what the Bible addresses is not the same as homosexuality as it is known today (Boswell, 1981:92-93; Cleaver, 1995:21-27; Edwards, 1984:13-23; Helminiak, 2004:25-27, 35)[1]. After all,

[1] The issue of same-sex orientation is most often assumed by pro-gay interpreters, but it is rarely defined — just assumed. Whatever this multivalent term (orientation) means, pro-gay interpreters accept that, at birth, a person is somehow biologically and/or genetically consigned to heterosexuality or homosexuality, along a spectrum between the two conditions. Here pro-gay interpreter Gudorf (2000:122) explains: "The most fundamental insight of recent social science regarding homosexuality concerns the discovery of sexual orientation, that is the discovery that sexual attraction in humans is neither uniformly heterosexual nor continuously plastic and fully open to manipulation by the will. Sexual orientation understood in terms of the object of one's sexual attraction, exists on a spectrum between exclusively heterosexual and exclusively homosexual, and for most persons in this culture is fixed relatively early in life." Prior to Gudorf's statement, she acknowledges the limitations of the science used to promote orientation: "Scientific research can and does suffer from design flaws and /or researcher bias, in addition to various problems in interpreting results." (Gudorf, 2000:122). In their scientific evaluation of the science behind the efforts to establish a biological/genetic link to same-sex attraction, Jones and Yarhouse (2000:47-91) highlight the cautions of Gudorf by concluding that the current research is inconclusive. Upon analysing the primary studies on the subject, Old Testament scholar, Grisanti (2008:201-202), asks: "First of all, is there a 'gay gene'? Science has in no

those who wrote the Bible could not have understood the nature of sexual orientation like those in the more advanced 21st century.

To adequately address the hermeneutical divide that exists on this topic, it is crucial to briefly examine the hermeneutical assumptions that inform both interpretational approaches, i.e., the grammatical-historical and the pro-gay hermeneutic. At its core, the debate surrounding this issue is primarily a hermeneutical one. To set the stage, the grammatical-historical methodology will be briefly defined, mentioning the basic underlying presuppositions that feed this literal approach (the grammatical-historical hermeneutic will be considered in greater detail in the next chapter). Then, five crucial assumptions that serve as the starting point for pro-gay interpreters will be surveyed before examining their resultant exegesis on Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

2.1 Grammatical-historical hermeneutic briefly considered

The essence of the grammatical-historical hermeneutic is that the principles associated with this technique seek to uncover the meaning of the original author through the text he wrote. This procedure includes the elements of scrutinizing the grammar, examining syntactical relationships, defining lexical meanings, surveying the cultural-historical background of the ancient Near East, and consideration of the literary genre (Miller *et al*., 2009:1).

Because the grammatical-historical method is often referred to as the "literal" method of interpretation, it is frequently viewed pejoratively and mischaracterized by pro-gay interpreters as being deficiently wooden and stilted (Edwards, 1984:xi; Helminiak, 2004:13, 19, 31). An important distinction, however, must be made between what Miller *et al.,* (2009:1) call "letterism" and the normal understanding of the passage. Letterism is more wooden and mechanical,

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fashion clearly demonstrated a fundamental or primary cause for homosexuality. That does not mean that genetics has nothing to do with homosexual desires and behaviour. However, any genetic factor does not determine that a person has a homosexual orientation, hence making it acceptable and moral. God's word is the primary source for what we believe about homosexuality.". In Christopher's (2009:28) estimation, the studies used to "prove" the gay gene theory are inconclusive: "In this whole debate we must distinguish between biological influences and biological determinism. It is entirely possible for a person to have certain predispositions (a mind-set) that may incline him or her to certain activities such as alcoholism or homosexuality. But to be inclined is not the same as being consigned toward certain behaviours". So the notion of same-sex orientation is far from a biological given. This prompts a response from White and Niell (2002:177), "… it is long stretch to move from being predisposed to homosexuality and finding homosexual behaviour necessary … the fact remains that God holds men accountable for their actions, even when that involves fighting against the 'lust of the flesh.' The Lord Jesus did not accept as a valid excuse for lusting after a woman: 'Men are predisposed to lust. We are made that way' … [Matthew 5:28-30]". When robbed of this critical assumption of an ill-defined "orientation", the unalterable born-that-way postulate, the pro-gay foundation is severely weakened.

failing to account for the distinctions the grammatical-historical enterprise yields by considering figurative uses of speech.[2]

It has been suggested, therefore, that because the term "literal" often evokes negative sentiment and is blamed for ignoring various figures of speech and differing genre, perhaps it would be more appropriate to use the phrase "interpreted normally", i.e., according to "normal rules of speech" (Draper & Keathly, 2001:156).[3] After all, this is precisely what the grammatical-historical hermeneutic seeks to do, i.e., to uncover the author's original meaning through the normal rules of speech. For this reason, the grammatical-historical approach, unlike many other methods, implies that the Bible is not a code that requires cumbersome rules to decipher some mystical meaning unavailable through the simplicity of the literal model.

The undergirding assumptions of the historical grammatical hermeneutic, which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 3, include (1) an authoritative, inerrant word which has been divinely revealed; (2) dual authorship between God and man; (3) the principle of the singular sense of any passage under consideration, unless Scripture itself indicates a secondary sense; (4) the authorial intent of Scripture is a hallmark of the grammatical-historical approach; and (5) the process of application as a separate and distinct work from hermeneutics (Shealy, 2002:161-178). These all combine to produce a unique God-breathed word that is authoritative in all that it addresses, including sexual ethics.

In contrast to the grammatical-historical method of interpretation, the pro-gay method of interpretation is diametrically different.

2.2 Five critical pro-gay hermeneutical assumptions

When compared to the grammatical-historical hermeneutic, pro-gay methodological assumptions require the interpreter to begin the hermeneutical task from a different horizon, viz. the horizon of the interpreter, who then endeavours to reach back to the horizon of the passage in question (Thiselton, 1993:10-17)[4]. Concisely stated, the pro-gay hermeneutical assumptions

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[2] No grammatical-historical interpreter actually takes the figurative language of Psalm 98:8 in a rigid, wooden sense: "Let the rivers clap their hands, Let the mountains sing together for joy." The literal interpreter understands the metaphor conveyed in the poetic imagery provided by the psalmist.

[3] Zuck (1995:147) helpfully suggests that interpreters distinguish between what he terms "figurative-literal interpretation" and "ordinary-literal", to underscore the difference between the two aspects of literal interpretation. This distinction avoids the image of hermeneutical rigidity often associated with the grammatical-historical approach.

[4] The 1980 work by Anthony C. Thiselton, *The two horizons*, has profoundly affected the traditional, i.e., grammatical-historical method of interpretation by promoting and emphasizing the interpreter's own vantage point

reveal an approach that is interpretationally eclectic, as the following five methodological assumptions indicate:

2.2.1 The assumption of differing authorities

Among pro-gay interpreters, there is a good deal of suspicion about the issue of biblical authority (Bird, 1994:63). If the Bible is not the ultimate source of authority, then where is the authority located? William Countryman (1990:3) maintains that "immediate practical authority is located in the ongoing Christian community". Feminist theologian Phyllis Bird (1994:63) echoes the same sentiment when she concedes that the Bible is a "product of tradition and a part of the church's ongoing tradition." Her "ongoing tradition" necessitates a continual communal interpretational dialogue. In this scenario, the weight of authority is shifted away from the past author to the present community, as the community "continues redefining boundaries" (Bird, 2000:146). In two different treatises, Bird (1994:63; 2000:144) further declares that "the word of God cannot be contained in any document" and, in keeping with communal authority, the Bible is "a conversation partner not an oracle".

Pro-gay interpreters Daniel Helminiak and Jack Rogers agree with the above assertions. Helminiak disparages those who hold to a literal hermeneutic, claiming that "it is outrageous for any educated person to quote the Bible to condemn homosexuality" (Helminiak, 2004:13). Helminiak (2004:19) casts further aspersions on biblical authority by claiming that it "does not provide the last word on sexual ethics". In Helminiak's (2004:26) opinion, the authority of science has trumped the Bible on this issue.

For his part, Rogers[5] (2006:7) negates an inerrancy of the Bible which extends beyond religious matters and "addresses … science and history". Why? Because, "it encourages a

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in the hermeneutical process. This is done by juxtaposing the interpreter with the historical context of the text. Thiselton (1993:11) states that "traditional hermeneutics began with the recognition that a text was conditioned by a given historical context. However, hermeneutics in the more recent sense of the term begins with the recognition that historical conditioning is two sided: the modern interpreter, no less than the text, stands in a given historical context and tradition." The concerns for this philosophical approach to hermeneutics should not be underestimated, as greater degrees of subjectivity give way to more relativistic interpretations favouring the present while usurping the past. This ultimately eclipses the authorial meaning of the text. Thiselton's proposal evidences the merging of application with the hermeneutical process, with the result that the original meaning of the text is either diminished or completely eclipsed, depending on the degree to which the interpreter's horizon is emphasized.

[5] The motivation for Roger's position can be seen in his 1981 collaborative effort, *Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*, with Donald McKim: The thesis of the Roger's and McKim proposal is summarized by Christopher (2010:37-38), who notes that their proposal sought "to prove that the historically central tradition of the church emphasized a biblical infallibility that was limited to matters of faith and practice. Restated, biblical infallibility is confined to redemptive issues and not to other areas the Bible mentions in passing like history, science, geography, etc. This means that the Bible carries little to no authority in matters outside the circle of salvation." Interestingly, Roger's view is predicated upon the influence of G.C. Berkouwer, under whom Roger's studied. Berkouwer, according to Christopher (2010:38), struggled with the concept of dual authorship of the Bible (human and divine): "He held that human involvement necessitated partial annulment of the divine aspects of inspiration. So, instead of

literal reading of Scripture" (Rogers, 2006:7). To this chorus-line of pro-gay voices, Edwards (1984:13) adds: "Biblical interpretation can never be divorced from other domains of human reflection and discovery". Edward's claim equates the revealed truth of the Bible with the incomplete discoveries of humanity.

2.2.2 The assumption of historical-critical methodologies

Given their view of biblical authority, it is not surprising to find pro-gay interpreters relying substantially on the use of historical-critical methodologies (Mohrman, 2004:58) in order to bypass the literal implications of the passages in question. In *The Queer Bible commentary*, David Tabb Stewart subscribes to historical criticism to help uncover the "multiple voices" in the redacted word in Leviticus (Stewart, 2006:78). In similar fashion, Helminiak (2004:34-35) insists that the historical-critical method yields "deeper levels of meaning" in the text. All of this can be used to "overturn long accepted interpretations", paving the way for a new understanding (Helminiak, 2004:38).

Heavy reliance upon the historical-critical method emancipates human reason from the supernatural aspects of the Bible as divine revelation (Larkin, 1988:30-31). This opens the gate for pro-gay interpreters to seek a *sensus plenior* meaning in the passage under investigation.

2.2.3 The assumption of liberation hermeneutics

The pro-gay methodology includes a distinct adherence to the basic hermeneutic employed by liberation theologians over the last 40 years or so. Both feminist[6] and gay hermeneutics trace their genealogy back to the theology of justice and liberation from oppression (Bird, 2000:145; Germond, 1997:191; Nortje-Meyer, 2005:175; West, 1995:108-117). In the effort of pursuing a "theology of inclusion" (Germond, 1997:188), the hermeneutical apparatus of liberation theology — the hermeneutical circle — is used to illuminate different relevant meanings in the text (Germond, 1997:189, 191).

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talking about a God-breathed word, he substituted the word 'witness' or 'testimony' for the idea of inspiration. Thus, the Bible is only the word of God by virtue of its witness concerning Christ … Regarding the cosmology and history of the Bible, Berkouwer would maintain that there are unintentional errors. This begs the question of how one can be certain there are no unintentional errors in the realm of salvation." So it is with this sceptical assessment of bibliology as a predicate, that Roger's advanced this thinking which gave rise to his disparagements related to biblical authority and ultimately the promotion of homosexuality as a non-redemptive matter.

[6] South African Liberationist, Gerald West (1995:108-117), outlines the feminist hermeneutic in his book *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation*. It is not surprising that those feminists he cites are also familiar names in pro-gay promotions that seek to wed the Bible to advancing gay rights — names like Rosemary Ruether, Virginia Mollenkott, and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. This is further evidence that it is a very short step from the hermeneutic circle of feminism to the hermeneutic circle that justifies homosexuality. For her part, Nortje-Meyer (2005:175-178) well demonstrates the inexorable link between the hermeneutic circle, feminist hermeneutic, and the pro-gay methodology. Also see Mollenkott 1993:72-95 and Althaus-Reid 2008:83-95.

The hermeneutic circle[7] of liberation theology uses the contemporary situation as the starting line, which in the case of gay people is the "experience and suffering" of being gay in a "heterosexist" society (Germond, 1997:210). Throughout the liberation process, the Bible is read through the lens of one's contemporary plight of oppression and pain. Emancipation from the tyranny of oppression is found only as the biblical text is advanced toward the goal of liberation (Larkin, 1988:153-58). In the liberation hermeneutic, truth is assumed to be fluid and dynamic, but never absolute. As the interpreter makes his or her way around the circle, liberal amounts of suspicion are applied to the text until the truth of orthopraxy (practice) is discovered and then applied, which eventuates in liberation.

In pro-gay hermeneutics, the hermeneutic circle is applied because the "androcentric binary system is also reflected in socio-cultural practices and therefore homosexual people fit into the categories of being *peripheral, marginal, other and passive object*" (Nortje-Meyer, 2005:175-76). Germond (1997:210) uses slightly different terminology, but he means the same thing when he describes what he calls "heterosexism" as a "reasoned system of bias regarding sexual orientation … analogous to sexism and racism … a power relationship of superiority and inferiority".[8] The goal of the liberation approach is to "depatriarchalize society and biblical texts … to dislodge androcentrism" (Nortje-Meyer, 2005:176), which the literal method is claimed to have produced.

Whether stated or implied, pro-gay interpreters make liberal use of this hermeneutic of suspicion beginning with the concerns of contemporary culture and then working around the hermeneutic circle until the Scriptural text is accommodated to present-day realities. Because truth is fluid, the newly derived meaning is never "final" (Edwards, 1984:12), so the journey around the hermeneutic circle begins anew.

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[7] Pro-gay liberation practitioner, Richard Cleaver (1995:11), outlines the four steps of the hermeneutical circle as follows: (1) begin with one's own experience, sceptically questioning societal norms and values; (2) exercise suspicion of the prevailing structures that enslave; (3) based on this suspicion, examine the Scriptures in a new and fresh way; and (4) finally, use the new interpretation of Scripture to help critique and create a new reality rooted in praxis. Then start the whole process all over, because truth and theology are dynamic. This means that one never arrives at a final conclusion.

[8] Pro-gay interpreters, like Germond, rely on the ambiguous notion of sexual orientation to postulate that opposition to homosexuality is tantamount to "racism and sexism" and, therefore, is a civil rights matter. But unlike race, gender, or disability, homosexuality does not share the same traits: (1) homosexuality is a self-identified trait, whereas race, gender, and disability are readily identifiable by all; (2) homosexuality has not empirically been proven to be immutable — as the testimonies of many former gays indicate — whereas race, gender, and disability are irreversible; (3) homosexuality is not morally neutral, whereas race, gender, and disability are — the Bible never morally condemns one for race, gender, or disability, congenital or otherwise.

2.2.4 The assumption of reader-response

Another aspect of pro-gay hermeneutics is reader-response criticism, which is a postmodern construct often used today. There are a variety of reader-response approaches that span the continuum from mild to radical reader-response. But, as the title suggests, the reader interacts with the text being read to one degree or another (McKnight, 1999:370-373; Parry, 2005:658-661). With this technique, the reader becomes the authority as the text is given life from the interpreter, so the locus of authority migrates from the text and the author's intent to that of the reader.

Pro-gay interpreters are fond of the reader-response approach. It is a logical conclusion of the communal authority mentioned above, as the community reads and analyses the text and then interdependently determines its meaning. Bird (2000:144) explains that "the story continues today", while Stewart (2006:102-103) concludes his sexualized commentary on Leviticus by appealing for a reader-response reading of Leviticus. Helminiak (2004:29) displays a deep reliance on reader-response criticism when he remarks that, devoid of a reader, the Bible "is only words". He continues that, in order for the text to acquire meaning, those words must "pass through someone's mind" (Helminiak, 2004:29). In this hermeneutical equation, authority is shifted from the text in question to the interpreter.

2.2.5 The assumption of social-scientific criticism

Among pro-gay interpreters, there is an emphasis on various tools offered by the recent development of social-scientific criticism, or social analysis[9] (Countryman, 1990:12-17; Rogers, 2006:125; Stewart, 2006:79; Van der Kooij, 2001:253). The social-scientific method attempts to "reconstruct the social worlds behind the texts … while simultaneously illuminating the lives of people living in those worlds" (Steinberg, 1999:478). There are a variety of models offered within this approach (Dvorak, 2007:249-78). The two models most commonly used by pro-gay interpreters on Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are the honour-shame motif (Stiebert and Walsh,

[9] Both Dvorak and Yamauchi issue a caution about the use of social-scientific criticism. Both men discuss the roots of the procedure finding fertile soil in the hermeneutics of suspicion, which is fed by philosophical luminaries like Nietzsche, Durkheim, Marx, Freud, and Webber (Dvorak, 2007:251-252; Yamauchi, 1984:176-179). Dvorak (2007:251) explains that social-scientific criticism is a tool preferred by those partial to Liberation Theology and its hermeneutic circle — those like feminists, liberationists, and now pro-gay interpreters can be added to this list. For his part, Yamauchi (1984:177) concludes that the theory has as its objective the neutralizing of "religious claims and belief of any truth value". He further links sociology to social Darwinism, seeing sociology as the application of evolutionary dogma to society (Yamauchi, 1984:177). Yamauchi's (1984:192) final conclusion on the value of the social-scientific method is that it can "at best reveal some general patterns but can at worst eliminate all that is unique or supernatural … if recognized as but one important way of looking at the phenomena, can be of considerable value to the exegete". In his concluding critique of the method, Dvorak (2007:277-278) highlights his concerns by cautioning against the social-scientist's tendency to "over-interpret" the text while resorting to "methodological egotism", all of which lends itself to a more eisegetical interpretation rather than an exegetical meaning. Still, Dvorak (2007:278) does not throw the baby out with the bathwater and sees some benefit in use of the method, if caution and checks are observed.

2001:119-152; Walsh, 2001:201-209), and the purity/pollution motif popularized by social anthropologist Mary Douglas in her seminal work *Purity and danger* (1999:341-363; cf. 2007:1-244).

The honour-shame motif is based on the group dynamic of the ancient kinship/family in the Mediterranean world of the first century (CE). The premise of honour and shame, according to Dickson (2002:352), is that "the individual's moral obligations are concentrated primarily within the family; outside the family [i.e., the group] interaction is often marked by distrust and competition". This view promotes the honour of the male within the Ancient Near Eastern family context, as men compete against one another, battling for honour and rank. Comparatively, women are conditioned to positive shame, which preserves their honour (Pilch & Malina, 1993:95-104). While there is some merit in this motif, it can be pushed to extremes and distort one's interpretation.

The other social-critical tool most often used by pro-gay interpreters is the purity motif. Without exception, every pro-gay proponent cited in this writing made use of Douglas and her purity theory of order and disorder based on Levitical dietary laws. Fundamental to this theory, the clean/unclean distinctions in Leviticus are an attempt to "classify and organize the disorderly natural world around it" (Steinberg, 1999:481). In the words of Douglas (2000:2), "dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder". Therefore, pro-gay advocate Countryman (1990:13) concludes that "purity is thus a system with the human being at or near its centre. Dirt is what lies outside the system, what is perceived as not belonging in association with people of this particular society, whether unfamiliar, irregular, unhealthy, or otherwise is objectionable". In other words, homosexual acts are considered among other cultural biases and hang-ups. The premise of note here is that there is no such thing as absolute dirt. Another way of phrasing this is to say: "Dirt is in the eye of the beholder." Described another way, Douglas is here referencing "matter out of place" (Klawans, 2000:8). The implication is that the "eye of the beholder" is subjective and arbitrary, not absolute. Hence, there is a resident relativism and subjectivity at the core of this contention.

In summary, the purity/pollution motif of Douglas affirms that the established boundaries between clean/unclean are culturally derived and specific to that culture, with no enduring application for modern readers.

As with the honour and shame motif, the purity motif has value when it does not become the dominating force exerted on the text. Some of the weaknesses of Douglas's approach are

highlighted and explained by Old Testament scholar R. Laird Harris (1990:528-536), who cautions against undue reliance on this method.[10]

2.3 Hermeneutical and exegetical dynamics of the pro-gay interpretation in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

In light of the above general hermeneutical assumptions, which serve as the foundation for pro-gay interpreters, a question needs to be asked: How do the aforementioned pro-gay assumptions affect their hermeneutical approach and exegesis of key homosexual texts like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13?

Leviticus 18:22 "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination."

Leviticus 20:13 "If *there is* a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

1. To adequately answer the preceding question, it will be beneficial to examine both pro-gay hermeneutics and the resulting exegesis through the lens of some conventional grammatical-historical categories. Although there are a number of other categories that could be used to examine the pro-gay treatment of these two crucial Levitical texts, only five will be considered: The contextual assumptions with which pro-gay interpreters approach the Levitical texts.
2. The next category in this analysis of the pro-gay interpretation is the cultural/historical considerations or the original socio-cultural setting in which the text was written.
3. The investigation of grammatical/lexical considerations of the text itself, including crucial syntactical relationships which are essential in determining meaning.
4. The *analogy of the faith* is another helpful aspect of the grammatical-historical process, as Scripture is compared to Scripture in an effort to see how the repeated words and similar syntax were used in other biblical passages.

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[10] Five of the chief criticisms Harris levels against Douglas's taxonomy of Levitical purity laws relates to: (1) Douglas's comparison of the ancient Israelites with more current tribal customs of those like the Navaho Indians (Harris, 1990:526); this is anachronistic; (2) her rejection of the contention that the Jews were given these purity regulations to distinguish them from their pagan neighbours (1990:526); in Douglas's schema she assumes that the Jews incorporated some aspects of the Canaanite style of worship; (3) the fact that Douglas confuses moral purity (Lv 18 and 20) with ritual purity laws (Lv 11-15) (Harris, 1990:527); (4) Harris (1990:528) also notes that Douglas's "theory that body is symbolic of society as a whole is interesting. It is, however, purely a subjective idea with no basis whatever in the Bible"; (5) Harris also critiques Douglas's contention that the classification of clean and unclean animals is based on the notion that their particular kind of locomotion is what determines their holiness. Harris responds (1990:528): "Do not sharks and eels have the right kind of locomotion in water? Or camels and pigs on land? Or owls or ospreys in the air?"

5. Lastly, once the meaning of the text is determined, then and only then should the interpreter apply that discovered meaning to the present situation.

So, using these five categories, how do pro-gay interpreters hermeneutically approach Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13? Then, what meaning do they derive from their exegesis?

2.3.1 Contextual assumptions of pro-gay interpreters in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

The grammatical-historical tradition defines context as the immediate textual context in which a paragraph, sentence, or word is used (Zuck, 1995:107). Like a concentric circle, context progresses from a word, sentence, paragraph, chapter, book of the Bible, and finally parallel passages (analogy of the faith) that can illumine a specific lexical unit. While pro-gay interpreters would not dispute this, there is a tendency for them to evaluate the historical text through present-day realities, as will be seen shortly. For this reason, the topic of contextual assumptions will be divided into two sub-categories: (1) reading the past through the prism of the present, and then (2) reading the past in its own context.

2.3.1.1 Contextual assumptions — reading the past through the prism of present considerations

Before even coming to the two texts under consideration (Lev. 18:22; 20:13), there are varying hermeneutical assumptions based on the cultural context of the pro-gay interpreter which serve to inform him or her about the text under consideration. This is what one might call the interpreter's hermeneutical context. As will be demonstrated, pro-gay interpreters rely on the present to inform the past.

What follows will illustrate the magnitude of influence the interpreter's hermeneutical context has on the pro-gay interpretation of the two Levitical passages. In her treatment of the Levitical proscription against same-sex activity between two males, Bird (2000:150) prefaces her analysis of Leviticus by claiming that, because the Bible is a "historical process", there is a chronological "divide". This renders books like Leviticus alien and, therefore, "unacceptable" to modern day readers (Bird, 2000:150). Bird's (2004:19) assumption closely parallels Helminiak's (2004:34-35) conviction that the Bible is not the final word on "sexual ethics", as various deeper levels of biblical meaning are revealed when "history unfolds". Described another way, the Bible's meaning progressively evolves and is shaped by the advance of time and the socio-cultural changes that result.[11] This corresponds to two horizons, viz. the original author's and the present-day interpreter's. The question is: which horizon is more influential?

[11] The unstated ramifications of this view are that truth is never certain or fixed, but always dynamically changing to fit the context of the moment. Simply stated, there are no abiding moral absolutes. Truth is in a state of constant flux

For his part, Edwards (1984:4) qualifies his liberation approach to the Scriptures with the hermeneutical circle and its circumscribing ingredient of suspicion, which makes interpretation a "bi-polar event". Edwards's (1984:5) "bi-polar" interpretation results in what he terms "Content Criticism", which endeavours to discern the distinction between "what the text says" and "what the text means". In Edwards's hermeneutical scheme, the plain sense of what the text "says" (surface-level meaning) differs from what that text "means" to the contemporary interpreter. Hence, the "bi-polar" nature of the hermeneutical process culminates in a bifurcated meaning of the text, whereby the interpreter's meaning eclipses what the text seems to "say".

Closely aligned with the Liberation Theology aspects of the pro-gay interpretation, Germond (1997:188-191), holding to the hermeneutical circle, contends that biblical interpretation is multivalent because it entertains "different interpretations".[12] In effect, Germond (1997:188) claims there are only two ways to interpret texts like Leviticus: either with the "theology of exclusion" or the "theology of inclusion". Not surprisingly, Germond (1997:191) advocates the inclusive hermeneutic which finds its starting point in the gay and lesbian experience of suffering. Advocating the same liberatine milieu, Miller (1989:126) believes that a whole "new hermeneutic" is required to replace the apparent inadequacies of the "white-male dominated hermeneutic". By this, he hopes to deconstruct the hetero-normative construct produced by the grammatical-historical method and replace it with a more equitable social "consciousness" (Miller, 1989:127).

According to Van der Kooij (2000:105-107), the source for this emphasis on present-day interpretational realities finds its germination in the counter-cultural uprising of the Sixties, which gave rise to the sexual revolution. The fruit of the chaotic Sixties produced an accent on the individual and a corresponding ego-centric starting point for interpretation (Van der Kooij, 2000:105). In turn, this ego-centric starting point invites the Christian to liberated Bible study where the interpreter can determine "which parts, or in which respects it [The Bible] is for him or her the 'word of God', the truth" (Van, der Kooij, 2000:106). Based on this supposition, Van der Kooij (2000:106) informs his readers that many scholars think the Old Testament is

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as the interpreter uncovers new meanings. Carried to its logical conclusion, this would mean that even pro-gay interpretations of today could easily be overturned tomorrow if the mood of society changes. If this is a valid way to interpret Scripture, then the pro-gay interpreters should be wary of condemning past views on homosexuality, since there was almost universal agreement by past interpreters about the texts in question. So any meaning is tenuous at best. This all fits well with Liberation Theology's hermeneutic circle where meaning is always in progress.

[12] This has much in common with what became known as the "fourfold sense of Scripture", which was promoted from the time of Augustine until and including the Middle Ages. Kaiser (Kaiser & Silva, 2007:222) explains this fourfold designation: the literal or surface-level meaning, the allegorical meaning (devotional), the tropological (moral) meaning, and the anagogical (mystical or eschatological). The recovery of *sola Scriptura* during the Reformation served as a much needed corrective to this highly subjective approach to hermeneutics.

"particularistic" and is, therefore, not always in keeping with modern day advances.[13] By declaring the Old Testament "particularistic", Van der Kooij means that it pertains primarily to ancient Israel, with questionable relevance for modern-day readers. Based on this understanding, modern-day concerns can easily be favoured above biblical texts. This results in time-honoured interpretations being discarded and replaced with meanings that are deemed more pertinent and relevant to present-day mores and values.

There are many variations and nuances of the interpreter's hermeneutical context, which affect the pro-gay interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Cleaver (1995:33) promotes "love"[14] as part of his hermeneutical centre, while Stiebert and Walsh (2001:122) elevate "field studies" above biblical texts. In yet another variation of this liberational theme, Punt (2006b:889) advances what he titles the "*rhetorical-emancipatory* paradigm views". The thrust of this hermeneutical adaptation from feminist scholar Schüssler Fiorenza is, at its core, "a critical socio-political interpretation of the Bible" (Punt, 2006b:889).[15] The one common denominator that unites all these *a priori* presuppositions is that interpretation is dynamically imparted as history unfolds. The question is whether pro-gay interpreters allow present-day concerns to unnecessarily intrude on their interpretation, thereby clouding the meaning of the text?

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[13] Mtshiselwa (2010:769, 772-773) is one example among many here when he declares that the Ancient Near Eastern world had no concept of human sexual orientation, because they were not scientifically advanced. Prior to this, he asserts that the "literal approach to Scripture fails" because of the immense historical and cultural gap that exists between the ancients and the moderns (Mtshiselwa, 2010:774). In this, Mtshiselwa supposes that science has empirically and diagnostically proved beyond doubt that various sexual orientations exist and are a product of biology.

[14] Clever's (1995:66) emphasis on "love" is quite common among pro-gay interpreters. His argument is that God's essential nature is love, which requires love to be the overriding characteristic of humans. This, in turn, promotes an "all you need is love" sexual ethic, which would mean that any sexual relationship and conceivable combination is okay as long as it is loving. The problem with this logic is that, although God is love, this is not all that God is. God is a complex of interrelated attributes that help inform and define one another other. The love of God cannot be divorced easily from this complex of attributes, like justice, righteousness, holiness etc. … for love takes its cue from all that God is, not from popular sentiment that reduces love to mere emotion. Interestingly, Clever never defines just what love is.

[15] Use of the rhetorical-emancipatory interpretation allows Punt (2006b:904) to conclude: "It has probably never been as important as in our postmodern, post-Apartheid world that hermeneutics cannot be posited as rules, systems or structures of interpretation — as techno-exegesis — but as being open to and indeed listening to the other as other (especially Gadamer; cf. Thiselton 2004:146), to reach towards an emancipatory hermeneutics. In the search for truth in the academy, church and society, it is to be remembered in *post-Apartheid* South Africa also, that 'biblical hermeneutic is itself grounded in the moral effect of truth, not merely in truth as a doctrinal formulation' (Anderson 1988:91)." Also see Punt (2006a:419-431) for his proposed hermeneutic for the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

2.3.1.2 Contextual assumptions — recreating the past context from the present

As in the previous point, there are a myriad of contextual assumptions and considerations that pro-gay interpreters bring to the hermeneutical table when attempting to uncover the meaning of biblical texts. When approaching a book like Leviticus, issues related to the date of its composition, redaction criticism, frequency of the issue, the nature of the proscribed acts mentioned in the texts, and the general assessments of the immediate context all coalesce to inform their eventual interpretation:

While not all pro-gay interpreters are in harmony on every hermeneutical point and conclusion, on the assumed late date of writing for Leviticus they are all agreed (Bird, 2000:149; Countryman, 1990:21; Nissinen, 1998:37-38).[16] Whether an Exilic or Post-Exilic date is assigned, there is unity on a late date for the book. If a 5th century (BCE) date can be assigned (cf. Nissinen above), then this would indicate that Leviticus is retrospectively proscribing homosexuality in the shadow of the Babylonian exile. This is thought to include legislative measures that would aid in safeguarding Israel from repeating past transgressions that would lead to future exile and forfeiture of their land to foreigners and pagans.

Redaction criticism is another important prong in the pro-gay contextual tool box upon which there is a common reliance. A common understanding, not limited to just pro-gay interpreters, is the dichotomized nature of Leviticus, with Priestly writers and redactors claiming responsibility for Chapters 1-16, while the Holiness school editors were responsible for Chapters 17-27 (Van der Kooij, 2001:254). With this understanding, pro-gay interpreters then assert that Leviticus 20:13 was probably a redactional expansion based on 18:22 (Bird, 2000:152). Olyan (1994:187-188) advances this understanding of redactional inclusion in 20:13, which then serves as one of the primary pillars of his unique argument on the nature of the homosexual acts mentioned there. Bigger (1979:193) believes that the ancient redactors focused on family laws "because of their concern for personal and communal purity". In comparison, Mohrman observes that redactional issues complicate the reconciliation of Leviticus 18:1-5 with what follows in verses 6-23 (2004:58), while Stewart (2006:78) assumes that the work of editors is apparent, as they

[16] While most scholars assign a late date to the compilation of Leviticus, based on higher-critical assumptions, there are still a considerable number of more conservative scholars who argue for Mosaic authorship and a 2nd millennium BCE writing, based on both internal and external data (Archer, 2007:91-102; Grisanti, 2011:219-220; Harris, 1990:502-513; Harrison, 1980:15-25; Hess, 2008:565-567; Kiuchi, 2007:16-18; Rooker, 2000:23-39; Ross, 2002:33-42; Waltke, 2009:1027-1029). Harrison (1980:23) concludes that an early date for Leviticus makes the best sense: "In view of these considerations, the most logical conclusion concerning authorship and date would be to recognize the antiquity and authenticity of Leviticus, and to regard it as a genuine second-millennium BC literary product compiled by Moses, with the probable assistance of priestly scribes." Waltke (2009:1029) similarly concurs: "Taking all this material into account, one gains the impression that the content of Leviticus is very old. In short, in contrast to the speculative theories of the critics, the hard facts support the scriptural claim for the book from its beginning to its end, throughout each of its major divisions."

established “boundaries” and “stitched texts together”. What is evident is that this redactional supposition impacts the pro-gay interpretation of 18:22 and 20:13.

A prominent contextual caveat marshalled by pro-gay interpreters is to note that, outside of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, there is virtual silence about the issue of homosexuality (Edwards, 1984:viii; Nissinen, 1998:37; Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:121). Countryman (1990:33) alludes to the paucity of Old Testament texts on homosexuality, when contending that, beyond Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the only other possible mention of male-male homosexual attraction is found in Deuteronomy 23:17 and 18, which prohibits male cult prostitution. It is universally believed by pro-gay interpreters that the seeming lack of biblical treatment does not favour the traditional interpretation of 18:22 and 20:13.

When Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 addresses what appears to be male homosexuality, just what is the text addressing — acts or orientation? Pro-gay interpreters are quick to note that what Leviticus proscribes is the homosexual act itself, not homosexual relationships (Boswell, 1981:92; Olyan, 1994:186). In other words, pro-gay interpreters approach these two texts with the implied notion that what the Bible condemns bears little resemblance to what we now know as a “loving” and “consensual” homosexuality that is relationally bound.[17]

Moving closer to the Levitical texts in question, what are the primary presuppositions pro-gay interpreters entertain concerning the immediate landscape that houses Leviticus 18:22 and

[17] The abstract notion of sexual orientation serves as one of the pro-gay presuppositional givens before they ever begin the hermeneutical process. Yet, as Mohler (2014:18) states, “the modern notion of sexual orientation is as a matter of fact exceedingly modern. It is also a concept without any definitive meaning. Effectively, it is used now both culturally and morally to argue about sexual attraction and desire. As a matter of fact attraction and desire are the only indicators upon which the modern notion of sexual orientation is premised.” Surprisingly, the American Psychological Association (2008:2) admits as much in a promotional online article on the matter of sexual orientation, where it says that, “although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors.” Similarly, the American Psychiatric Association (cited in Burk, 2015:109) concedes “that the causes of sexual orientation (whether homosexual or heterosexual) are not known at this time and likely are multifactorial including biological and behavioural roots which may vary between different individuals and may even vary over time.” More to the point, they do not really know. There are, at present, no empirical diagnostics that can determine whether one is born gay or not. To this, Lambert (2014:81-82) observes that the Bible uses the terminology of “desire” instead of “orientation” to communicate the same idea. There is no moral requirement for the Bible to use the same exact language to communicate the same concern. Lambert then details the biblical use of the word “desire” both in sexual contexts as well as others (2 Pt. 3:3; Jude 16; Gl 5:16; Col 3:5; Js 1:14). These texts portray the potency and the persistence of these deep seated-desires. Yet, in the end, the presence of such overwhelming desire does not determine morality. So to insist, as pro-gay interpreters do, that what the Bible addresses bears no resemblance to the homosexuality of today is purely speculative. While the Levitical texts (18:22; 20:13) may address the actual acts, this does imply a proscription against the lustful desires that precede the act — especially if one considers a nexus between the 7th and 10th Commandments. After all, Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, proscribes the desires that precede the act of adultery (Mt 5:27-28), while Paul, in Romans 1:26, denounces the degrading desires that pave the way to homosexual acts.

20:13? In Van der Kooij's (2000:109) estimation, generally speaking, there are two main contextual avenues an interpreter can traverse. The first would see and maintain that there is an inter-textual relationship between Leviticus 18 and 20 and the creative order (Gn 1 & 2). In close keeping with this, Mohrman (2004:62) couples Leviticus 18 with the larger pericope of Exodus 19 to Numbers 10, though he does not elaborate on this intertextual connection. Elsewhere, Stewart (2006:77) briefly admits that Leviticus makes "complex use of Genesis and Exodus", but he fails to explain the particulars of that relationship. The second contextual avenue Van der Kooij (2000:109) detects is one in which the texts in Leviticus adopt a worldview that recognizes the dangers of the fertility of the pagan rites of that day, while correspondingly acknowledging the biblical procreation injunction. The distinction between these two understandings is stark. Linking Leviticus 18 and 20 with the creative order would cast these Levitical proscriptions as normative in some way. Conversely, a purity understanding of these sexual injunctions would render their effect null and void in the current Christian context, therefore signifying that the Levitical prohibitions were for a specific place, people, and time. This results in texts that are merely of descriptive value.[18]

So what is the predominant contextual horizon of pro-gay interpreters, as it relates to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13? The overwhelming position is that the sexual regulations of Leviticus 18 and 20 are historically and culturally restricted to the religious context of that day — that of Israel's in contrast to the pagan religion of her neighbours. There are certainly shades of variance and degrees of difference between pro-gay interpreters on this, but they would all (Bigger, 1979:202; Bird, 2001:152; Boswell, 1981:100; Walsh, 2001:204) essentially agree with Olyan's (1994:183) statement: "The only link is purity." Of course, this insinuates that these Levitical laws have no binding moral address for the 21st-century Christian, as their cultic emphasis applies only to the time in which they were written.

The contextual logic of pro-gay interpreters is well expressed by paraphrasing Mohrman (2004:62-63), who explains that the general admonitions in Leviticus 18 and 20 afford protection for Israel from sexualized aspects of Canaanite religion while simultaneously creating an opportunity for Israel to further develop their knowledge and understanding of their unique and holy God. Feminist scholar Frymer-Kensky (1988:89) offers further insight here, when she explains that, in ancient Israel, "sex was desacralized and kept as far away from the cult as possible". Accordingly, specific regulations extended to the family as a protective measure for

[18] In Chapter 4, the aspect of creation ordinances will be dealt with more adequately. There, the universality of the creation paradigm i.e., ordinance, will be discussed in relation to its extension to all people of all times and all places. In Leviticus, what is seen is a specific application of this same paradigm for a distinct people at a specific time and place. So it can be argued that the inherent principle found in the Levitical sexual proscriptions is still applicable, even if that application varies from ancient Israel's mandate.

the preservation of the family unit and ostensibly the security of the nation as a whole (Frymer-Kensky, 1988:91-95).

The sum of these pro-gay contextual observations indicates that both present-day interests, coupled with a predetermined historical-critical setting and framework of the texts (Lv 18:22; 20:13), combine to influence a less-than-traditional interpretation of these two texts.

2.3.2 The cultural and historical assessment of Leviticus

Another critical component of the grammatical-historical hermeneutic is the cultural and historical assessment of the book or passage under scrutiny. Ramm (1993:150) rightly insists that a measure of knowledge on both the history and culture is necessary to arrive at the correct interpretation of a biblical passage (cf. Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:93-143; McQuilkin, 1992:91-107). In his definition of culture, Zuck (1995:79) quotes Webster: Culture is "the total pattern of human behavior [that includes] thought, speech, action, and artefacts … [and as] the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits … of a racial, religious, or social group". Likewise, Ramm echoes almost the same sentiments regarding culture, with a well-rounded description that approximates Zuck's (1995:152) quotation of Webster. As Ramm (1995:152) explains, familiarity with the culture in which a verse was written is often instructive in determining the *usus loquendi* of words or phrases.

In parallel importance to the culture in which Scripture was revealed and penned is the history of a passage. Every event and situation in the Bible was couched in the flow of history that is often unearthed through archaeology and the preserved writings from that era (Ramm, 1993:154). Thus, assigning the right historical era to a passage or portion of Scripture has significant implications for the interpretive process.[19]

As the pro-gay hermeneutical process is further analysed in relation to the cultural/historical category, there are three differing, sometimes interrelated, cultural constructs that pro-gay interpreters rely upon to frame the logic to their arguments: (1) the purity/pollution paradigm popularized by Douglas; (2) the honour-shame motif of the Ancient Mediterranean World; and (3) what might be termed the classical-cultural analogy, which is expounded by Olyan in his unique treatment of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

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[19] As Kostenberger and Patterson (2011:127) observe: "Christianity is a historical religion, and Scripture presupposes that God revealed himself in human history. This requires that Bible students have sensitivity to historical factors, both chronological timelines and historical-cultural customs that have bearing on biblical interpretation." They proceed to deal with the important distinction between identifying what is culturally relative versus what is culturally normative (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:127-128), which is no easy task. Devoid of the historical background and culture, McQuilkin (1992:91) warns that "communication of meaning is difficult, if not impossible."

2.3.2.1 The purity/pollution paradigm of Douglas

The purity/pollution paradigm of Douglas (2.2.5) has become an indispensable element in the pro-gay arsenal. In summary, Douglas (2007:51-71) maintains that one can discern patterns in the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. She contends that every living creature conforms to characteristics of its class, whether crawling, creeping, swimming, or flying things; there is a definite taxonomy and circumscribing nomenclature that delineates each class. To cross these boundaries, then, is forbidden and results in uncleanness when transgressions occur. Holiness requires that these established boundaries conform to their distinctive class (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:125).[20]

Pro-gay interpreters apply Douglas's purity/pollution paradigm to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to form an interpretive structure tied to the cultic considerations of purity and defilement in the realm of sexuality and gender (Bird, 2000:154; Countryman, 1990:26, 27). To paraphrase Mohrman (2004:66), the human body is an example like any bounded system, and just like eating, sex has two entrances and exits that serve as defining boundaries. To confuse these sexual boundaries, with sexual transgressions, like male-male anal intercourse, is to blur the intended gender-role boundary by treating the male like a female (Countryman, 1990:26-27; Olyan, 1994:199).

This confusion leads to defilement for the individual and the community at large, ultimately threatening Israel's existence in the land (Olyan, 1995:185-189), while precariously dissolving divine categories (Frymer-Kensky, 1988:11). Following Frymer-Kensky's (1988:11) rationale,

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[20] Kaiser (1994:1076) well summarizes the crux of Douglas's complex anthropological theory: "When the social background is kept in mind, argues Douglas, certain natural groupings emerged. For those who shepherd sheep and goats, it was natural to regard those animals as clean … The holiness desired in mortals had its corollary standards of cleanness desired in animals. The division between clean and unclean corresponded to the division between holy Israel and the Gentile world. Thus, for Douglas, the notion of wholeness or normality was key to determining the distinctions in the animal realm … Any deviation from normality within a particular class (such as insects walking on all fours, thereby creating confusion with other realms) rendered that member unclean." Kaiser challenges these claims by noting that "Douglas's category of 'normality' seems to run opposite to the creation account, where all creatures that came from God's hand were called 'good'. Even some of the animals that conformed to their own class were not called clean." In his critique of Douglas's view, Meigs (1978:304-318) argues that Douglas fails to distinguish between what is a "mess" versus the nature of "pollution". The emission of bodily fluids is not something that is merely regarded as "out of place", "anomalous", or "messy" like clothes strewn all over the bedroom, but is polluting, "because they begin to decay as soon as they leave the body. The fear and revulsion which humans feel at decaying substances, at pollution, undoubtedly reflects our fear of the decay which often precedes death, which of course always follows it" (Meigs, 1978:313). This corresponds with the Levitical concept of God's presence in the Tabernacle, and as the life-giver and life-sustainer of all creation, those physical issues that tended towards death/decay led to impurity and required the mandated cleansing rituals. In keeping with this idea, Kiuchi (2007:38) maintains that the "'death'-motif" is probably the only rationale that encompasses all the various cases of uncleanness in Leviticus 11-15. It is worth noting, though, that there is significant distinction between physical purity and moral purity (Averbeck, 1997:477-478) — a distinction reflected in the difference between Leviticus 10-16 and 18-20. It is important to acknowledge that there were no cleansing rites for moral/spiritual purity violations. For further evaluation of Douglas's assertions see Firmage (1990:177-208) and Footnote 10 of this chapter, where Harris's fivefold assessment is summarized.

safe-guarding these categories remains a “cosmic issue” that distinguishes humanity from the divine sphere, while simultaneously preserving human distinction from the animal kingdom at the same time.

In the pro-gay understanding and application of the purity/pollution paradigm, the Holiness Code delineated a number of sexual taboos that were meant to keep Israel separate and distinct from other surrounding nations (Helminiak, 2004:54). Consequently, the essence of the Levitical proscription (Lev. 18:22; 20:13) was to prohibit male-male intercourse in order to prevent confusion of the sexual roles of the man and the woman (Helminiak, 2004:52; Nissinen, 1998:43). To do so was an “abomination” (Lv 18:22). As Nissinen (1998:43) argues, confusing human gender roles was a breach of culture, not a “matter of personal preference or orientation”.

Based on their development of the purity/pollution paradigm, pro-gay interpreters finally conclude that the cardinal concern of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is solely a purity issue, wholly unrelated to moral concerns of an enduring nature (Helminiak, 2004:55). In this, it is a mere mixing of kinds, not unlike cloth comprised of both wool and linen (Countryman, 1990:27). Therefore, because these proscriptions related only to the cultus of the day, there is no enduring application for those beyond ancient Israel’s time, as the same cultural sentiments and conditions do not exist today (Countryman, 1990:39; Nissinen, 1998:43).[21]

2.3.2.2 The honour-shame motif

Critical to the arguments offered by Stiebert and Walsh (2001:119-152), is the honour-shame model which they discuss and define by way of background before beginning to develop their thesis (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:123-128). The crux of their reasoning is that, within the Ancient Mediterranean World, the honour-shame cultural construct was a dominating force to promote and sanction acceptable behaviour that would not bring shame to the group, because honour was primarily a community value (Pilch & Malina, 1993:96; Toews, 2003:385-386). It is within this context that Stiebert and Walsh, as well as Walsh (2001:201-209) in a separate article,

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[21] In Klawans’s (2000:9) assessment of Douglas’s theory, he explains that her view and the variations of her view by others is informed by the presupposition that “impurity systems are always indicative of oppression or patriarchal societies” that see “impurity and sin … always … closely identified.” This comports with Yamauchi’s (1984:181) critique of the social-scientific method for failing to remain objective and “value free”, while facing (1984:180) the “problem of reductionism”. Klawans (2000:9) then cites and paraphrases the work of David Z. Hoffman on defilement, who distinguishes between defilement that leads to impurity and defilement that is related to holiness. According to Hoffman, purity defilement is remedied through the prescribed purity ritual, whereas holiness defilement, like adultery, homosexuality, incest, and bestiality, has no corresponding rituals, sacrifices, or ceremonies that procure a holy status again. Based on this evaluation, it appears that pro-gay interpreters have over-applied Douglas’s anthropological rubric while failing to sufficiently critique it. This has resulted in an over-generalized outcome that is too reductionist.

advance the idea that the Ancient Near Eastern and Ancient Mediterranean World believed that masculinity is distinct and superior to femininity, a belief which also guided their practice.[22] It was, therefore, an insult for a man to assume the role of a woman in sexuality as the passive partner. This was an insult and disgrace to his honour as a born male (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:125).

Stiebert and Walsh (2001:125-127) then wed their understanding of honour-shame to Douglas's purity/pollution paradigm, concluding that for an Israelite free-born male to assume the receptive role of the woman, is to confuse societal boundaries and so defile himself, while simultaneously dishonouring the whole of the community in the process (2001:127; cf. Douglas, 2007:51, 67). Primary in their thinking is the concept that the passive partner is ignominiously "shamed", because this mixing of gender roles is "unnatural" (Stiebert and Walsh, 2001:127). This is equal to Douglas's "dirt". Upon this foundation, Stiebert and Walsh (2001:128) are careful to claim that homosexuality was defined within the honour-shame model, and accordingly the kind of homosexuality the ancient Jews were addressing was defined on the basis of what society at large determined was proper. Their reckoning of honour-shame concludes that any modern concept of sexual orientation is, therefore, excluded from Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

In an attempt to solidify their position, Stiebert and Walsh (2001:144) rely upon the classical culture of Greece and Rome, noting that in Greece male-male couplings were acceptable only if both parties were members of the same social class. This normally required a younger male with an older man, but both of the same social stratum. They then observe that Rome offered a variation on male-male intercourse, requiring free male citizens of all ages to never accept the passive role in same-sex activities, for this would be deemed shameful if both men were social equals. This would be equally shameful if a social inferior were to penetrate a free male citizen. So, in Greece, same-sex activity was to involve two males from the same social stratum, while Rome only approved of male-male coupling when both men were from different social ranks, with the free-born male taking the active role.[23] The heart of the Greek and Roman perspectives on male homosexuality is bound by social status, not gender roles. The morality of the issue is

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[22] See Haas (1995:321-336) regarding the issue of patriarchy and gender in the Old Testament and the biblical treatment of women in the both the Old Testament and New Testament economies. Haas (1995:333) addresses the use of "modern western presuppositions of progress, an assumption that involves the modern hubris that our understandings and cultural patterns of male-female relations are superior to those of our ancestors simply because of our historical position … This undermines the authority of the Bible by assuming that our modern perspective may evaluate the patterns of application to male-female practices in the NT."

[23] What pro-gay interpreters fail to mention is the fact that the neither Greece nor Rome had a divine word from God on the matter. It is well known that the panoply of gods and goddesses in the pagan pantheon did not address such ethical issues. As a consequence, there were no real defined sexual boundaries in the ANE context.

not a primary concern for either culture, just the shame incurred by not adhering to societal rules.[24]

By assuming continuity of the honour-shame model across the Ancient Mediterranean World, Stiebert and Walsh (2001:144) suggest that the Levitical legislation was "addressed to the free male Israelite citizen, the head of the household". The use of such logic allows Stiebert and Walsh (2001:145) to conclude: "The two legislative texts in Leviticus have a very narrow and very precise purview. They envisage one situation only: anal intercourse between two men, one of whom is a free adult male Israelite who takes the passive sexual role of being penetrated by the other. The underlying system of social values within which those laws must be understood is gender-construction of maleness in a society where honour and shame are foundational social values … Other forms of male-male sexual encounter, encompassing the whole range of physical expressions of affection up to and including non-penetrative intercourse, are not envisaged in these laws. And the issue of *orientation* is not broached at all."

In their treatment of the honour-shame motif, Stiebert and Walsh assume a great deal while taking significant leaps in logic. They fail to consider whether or not Israel's version of honour-shame is markedly different than other surrounding Mediterranean cultures. If Israel's application of honour-shame is distinct, what is distinct about it and to what degree is it distinct? If distinct, why is it distinct? Furthermore, how did Pentateuchal honour-shame compare to later understandings, assuming Mosaic authorship and inspiration?[25] This is never entertained by Stiebert and Walsh.[26]

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[24] Walsh and Stiebert focus on the distant cultures of Greece, Rome, and Assyria as if this issue were viewed uniformly across the Ancient Near Eastern society. Both Greece and Rome were quite chronologically removed from the Levitical account, especially if a second millennium date is granted to the book. Possible (but unproven) cultural similarities with the distant worlds of Greece and Rome are of little value for demonstrating cultural uniformity if a 1446 BCE date is ascribed to Leviticus. Hess (2008:744) counters the contention of Walsh and Stiebert when he says, "Possible (but unproven) cultural similarities with the distant worlds of Greece and Rome are of little value for demonstrating cultural norms." In their zeal, Walsh and Stiebert have over-generalized by over-applying what amounts to a general, but certainly not monolithic, pattern.

[25] See DeSilva, (2003:431-436).

[26] In their treatment of the honour-shame motif, pro-gay interpreters abuse the use of the motif by over emphasizing it. In so doing, they have subordinated the Bible to the control of their method. McQuilkin warned against this in his 1977 JETS article (31-43), *The behavioral sciences under the authority of Scripture.* His primary thesis is that Scripture should function as a control on external disciplines like psychology, sociology, and anthropology. It is his belief (McQuilkin, 1977:36) that when "the basis of interpreting Scripture, is from the perspective of cultural anthropology or naturalistic psychology, for example, Scripture is no longer the final authority. Cultural relativism, environmental determinism and other anti-Biblical concepts seep in and gradually take control." The undue emphasis of pro-gay interpreters on both the purity/pollution model of Douglas and the honour-shame motif illustrates McQuilkin's concern.

2.3.2.3 The historico-cultural approach of Olyan

One other pro-gay scholar that is frequently cited and quoted is Olyan, who has a unique cultural construct that he uses to buttress his essential argument. Utilizing selected examples from the surrounding Ancient Near East and Ancient Mediterranean World, Olyan (1994:194) attempts to shore up his primary thesis which promotes the view that, originally, only the insertive party in Leviticus 18:22 was condemned.

So how does Olyan justify the above claim? Before explaining his unusual arguments, it is helpful to summarize the primary presuppositions that serve as a catalyst for his deductions:

- He considers Leviticus 20:13 to be a redactional expansion of 18:22 that is "awkwardly recast", revealing a two-stage development of the Levitical pericope (Lev. 18-20) (Olyan, 1994:187-188). This notion amounts to a two-source hypothesis of 18:22 and 20:13.

- Olyan's (1994:183, 197) overarching framework for these sexual regulations is one of purity, not morality. Because the nature of the proscriptions under consideration is purity, it is therefore limited to the cultus; Israel's compliance will prevent defilement of the land which would result in their extradition from a land they were guilty of polluting.

- In keeping with so many other pro-gay scholars earlier referenced, Olyan (1994:186) reasons that 18:22 does not compare to the version of homosexuality that is now acknowledged and understood. Apparently, when juxtaposed, the past and present forms of homosexuality are diametrically different.

- In unison with so many other pro-gay interpreters, Olyan (1994:185) advocates that the violation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 speaks of socially determined gender roles, in relation to sexuality, being violated.[27]

When these initial assumptions are added to Olyan's syntagmatic treatment of the texts — which will be partly considered in the next point — he determines that what the Levitical texts are concerned with in 18:22 is the innocence of the receptive partner. Olyan's accounting of the situation leads him to conclude that only later, after 20:13 was redacted, were both parties condemned as violators.

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[27] So does this imply that current views on adultery, incest, and other sexual distortions are equally nuanced and should be socially reconfigured? Olyan fails to discuss this. Olyan fails to mention whether the other sexual proscriptions of Leviticus 20 were redacted interpolations as well.

To justify this terminus, Olyan (1994:190) borrows select historico-cultural examples from Athens, Rome, and Assyria, which he believes establish the guiltlessness of the receptive male partner in these various cultures: Olyan (1994:190) postulates that Athenian culture legislated that adult males were only to penetrate legal inferiors like slaves, women, aliens, and youths. In comparison, although similar to Athens, Rome's rules for the receptive and insertive roles were primarily status-bound, prohibiting a free-born citizen from being penetrated by an equal or inferior (Olyan, 1994:190).[28]

In both the Athenian and Roman settings, "inappropriate penetration" was equated with "feminization … to be feminized was to surrender male status and authority" (Olyan, 1994:191), which only a social inferior was permitted to do. Olyan (1994:191) recognizes that Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are in contrast to Athens and Rome, because the two Levitical texts treat the receiver as "sex-bound and gender-bound", not "status-bound". Accordingly, these Levitical verses indicate there were no textual qualifications like status, age, or other limiting factors involved in the prohibition, unlike Athens and Rome.

Correspondingly, Olyan (1994:192) declares that neither the Hittite Laws nor the Middle Assyrian Laws[29] forbid male-male intercourse without qualification (*Contra* Wold, 1998:43-56). Olyan (1994:193) is of the opinion that Middle Assyrian Law §19 is concerned with a man being falsely accused of "being a 'female'" (cf. Sprinkle, 2003:747) for participating in what seemed to be willing receptive penetration. Conversely, Middle Assyrian Law §20 was the proscription of an apparent rape between two males of the same status.[30] In the last instance, only the aggressor was punished with sodomy and castration (Sprinkle, 2003:747). Olyan (1994:193) does caution that the Levitical record does not insinuate the insertive partner does so coercively.

Predicated on the aforementioned, Olyan (1994:195) summarizes which culturally derived components determine the difference between "licit" and "illicit" couplings between males: In the Classical World of Athens and Rome, social status was a key factor, while in era the of Middle Assyrian Law, a combination of social status, coercion, and the regularity of the acts were all aspects upon which the parameters of male-male homosexuality were drawn. When juxtaposed with Leviticus, Olyan concedes that the Levitical injunctions are comprehensive in their scope,

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[28] The view Olyan espouses here contradicts the assertion of Walsh and Stiebert, who advance the notion of Greek homosexuality being uniformly of the same status — while an age disparity was normally present, both parties would have been of the same status, according to Walsh and Stiebert.

[29] See Chapter 3 (3.2.2.1) for an expanded discussion of the Middle Assyrian Laws Olyan cites.

[30] But the MAL in Assyria do not limit the prohibition, as Olyan thinks. Hess (2008:744) reaches a similar conclusion.

even prior to the editing of the final H redactors (Olyan, 1994:195), and not as narrow in intent as Athens, Rome, and Assyria (cf. 3.2.3.3).

In spite of some honest admissions, Olyan (1994:203) nevertheless draws parallels between Greece, Rome, and Assyria, conjecturing that the receptive male partner was not originally punished prior to 20:13. He then concludes that 20:13 condemns both parties, because the final H redactors were attempting to prevent pollution of the land by the mixing of two incompatible elements — semen and excrement. Hence, the 20:13 proscription was meant to keep Israel from again jeopardizing their possession of their God-given land.

Pro-gay interpreters have amply demonstrated a strong reliance on the broad category of cultural/historical considerations when evaluating the legal proscriptions in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. This is achieved by making considerable use of the purity/pollution paradigm which establishes distinctive boundary categories not meant to be confused with other unauthorized classifications, for this leads to defilement, i.e., uncleanness. Stiebert and Walsh evidence a heavy reliance on the honour-shame model of the Ancient Mediterranean World, whereby individuals are to behave in prescribed ways that will not bring the group into disrepute and question. In similar vein, Olyan endeavours to strengthen his argument by finding similar patterns in the nearby Ancient Near East and Ancient Mediterranean World. In Chapter 7, the pro-gay usage and reliance on these three structures will be analysed and evaluated.

2.3.3 The pro-gay treatment of the grammatical-lexical principle

The third hermeneutical category to now be considered is the grammatical and lexical, which is arguably the most important topic under consideration here. In his treatment of this subject, Zuck (1995:99) makes an important observation regarding the verbally inspired nature of the biblical text, which, he duly notes, requires an interpretation that honours the Bible as God's divine revelation. Producing an interpretation of integrity of divine inspiration depends in large measure on making proper and thorough use of the grammatical and lexical element in the interpretational process.

Zuck (1995:100) divides the grammatical and lexical into the following designations: (1) lexicology is that aspect which helps uncover word meanings; (2) morphology evaluates the various forms of the words; (3) grammar then examines the various parts of speech that help identify the function of words and various word combinations in a given context; (4) syntax explores the different technical relationships that exist in a given passage (cf. Ramm, 1993:128-138).

Armed with this basic understanding of the grammatical and lexical approach, the pro-gay interpreters will now be discussed, using this general definition and structure as two critical areas are highlighted. First, at the heart of the pro-gay interpretation, is their lexical understanding of the Hebrew word "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה as it is used in the Levitical legal context. The second key area to be examined will be the various grammatical/syntactical observations they make, which are vital to their ultimate interpretations.

2.3.3.1 The pro-gay interpretation of תּוֹעֵבָה "abomination"

The pro-gay interpreters spend an appreciable amount of time focusing on the lexical meaning of one crucial Hebrew word — "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה — which is used six times in Leviticus 18 and 20 (18:22, 26, 27, 29, 30; 20:13): twice in the singular (18:22; 20:13), while its four plural uses are found in 18:26-30. This one term is so critical to the pro-gay interpretation that Germond (1997:218) sees the meaning of "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה as the "key" to understanding Leviticus on this issue. Because of the weight pro-gay interpreters give to this one word, a brief survey of the term by select pro-gay scholars will be considered along with the subtle nuances of meaning they each offer:

Bird: Regards "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה to be an exilic term with the Pentateuchal meaning related to the foreign cultic context (Bird, 2000:152). This cultic context insures that "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה does not convey an ethical meaning (Bird, 2000:152). Instead, based on the cultic context, it is a boundary term that ritually distinguishes Israel from her pagan neighbours. As the word specifically relates to 18:22 and 20:13 it connotes a "sense of revulsion toward a practice that is culturally unacceptable" (Bird, 2000:157). So, when a male is "forced" into a role reserved for a female, it produces corresponding shame.

Boswell: Like Bird, Boswell (1981:100) contends that "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה is a word that merely distinguishes Israel from the surrounding pagan nations. The meaning of the word designates something or a particular action unclean, whether it is eating pork or partaking in male-to-male intercourse. This effects "ethnic contamination" and amounts to "idolatry" (Boswell, 1981:102). Accordingly, there is nothing inherently evil in the term that would indicate its use is associated with truly evil acts like "rape" and "theft" (Boswell, 1981:100).

In further support of this meaning, Boswell (1981:101) cites the Septuagint[31] (LXX) and its use of Greek terminology for "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה in Leviticus. The Septuagint uses the Greek word

[31] All references in this dissertation from the Septuagint come from *The Lexham English Septuagint* 2013.

βδέλυγμα,[32] which he says is a term dealing with "infringements of ritual". Boswell (1981:101) reasons, if the term "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה carried an ethical sense, then LXX translators would have used an alternative word like ἀνομία, because it focuses on "violations of the law".

Boyarin: With a heavy reliance on the philosophical presuppositions of Foucault, Boyarin (1995:333-336) defines תּוֹעֵבָה in a way that narrowly limits the meaning to that which seeks to "decouple sexuality" from "gender-kinds" (Boyarin, 1995:344-345) . From the ancient Hebrew point of view, men penetrate and woman are receivers, so for a man to receive, as a woman does, would constitute a confusion of kinds (Boyarin, 1995:347). Boyarin (1995:348) concludes that the only thing תּוֹעֵבָה proscribes is the cultural taboo of gender dimorphism.

Edwards: In order to define "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Edwards first examines Ezekiel (1984:53) where he connects 15 of Ezekiel's 43 uses of "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה to idolatry (6:9, 11; 7:20; 8:6 [2 times], 9, 13, 15, 17; 14:6; 16:36 [Hebrew]; 18:12, 13; 20:14; 22:2). Edwards (1984:53) then cites examples in Ezekiel where idols are placed in synonymous parallelism with abominations תּוֹעֵבוֹת (14:6), thus equating the two ideas, while 16:36 positions idols and abominations תּוֹעֵבוֹת in an adjectival relationship. Later in his commentary on this matter, Edwards links "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to Ezekiel's idolatrous use of the word. He then extrapolates a meaning that results from idolatrous actions linked to the surrounding pagan cults warned of in the Levitical context (Edwards, 1984:64-65). To strengthen his contention, Edwards (1984:64) sees a cultic context in Leviticus 18:21-23, with 18:21 related to child sacrifice to the pagan god Molech[33], and the bestiality of 18:23 is declared by Edwards to be cult associated. By taking this circuitous route, Edwards defines "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה in relationship to idolatry.

Germond: Closely related to the other definitions already given, Germond (1997:218) describes "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה in the context of holiness. He says this holiness context is concerned with maintaining creation distinctions, so that natural categories are not mixed and, therefore,

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[32] While Boswell seeks to limit the meaning of βδέλυγμα to that of "infringements of ritual", BDAG (2000:171) renders two general senses of the word: (1) the first is a usage that includes a general meaning, where something is described as "detestable" or "abhorrent" in the sight of God (see Luke 16:15); (2) the second meaning given by BDAG applies more specifically to the "defiling" of a sacred place or sanctuary with the result that it is an "abomination". The NIDNTTE expands significantly on BDAG's bipartite meaning while alluding to the LXX's 60 uses of the word in place of תּוֹעֵבָה in a variety of contexts. From this, it can be seen that the word is not static in its meaning, but rather encompasses a wide range of contexts that are not necessarily all related solely to cultic connotations. In this is seen the broad range of meaning, which is context-dependent. In this light, Boswell's claimed meaning is arbitrary and contrived in the Levitical context, which clearly has more than cultic context in mind.

[33] Although there is debate surrounding Leviticus 18:21 and Molech,Van Der Toorn (2006:2054) believes that Molech was a real deity in the pagan pantheon identified with human sacrifice by fire. This is the position this writer and dissertation promotes.

abominated. Because of its association with pagan fertility rites, male homosexuality is a תּוֹעֵבָה "abomination". Again, there is an overlap with its association with idolatry.

Helminiak: He follows the lead of Boswell's definition when he defines "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה as a "synonym for unclean" (Helminiak, 2004:56). This makes male-male intercourse both "culturally and nationally forbidden" (Helminiak, 2004:62). Following this line of thought, the transgressions of 18:22 and 20:13 are socially taboo and devoid of ethical import. Helminiak ponders why the Hebrew word זִמָּה (*zimmah)* was not used instead of the ritually nuanced תּוֹעֵבָה. This is because זִמָּה unambiguously speaks of a sin that is inherently wrong. Then, in close connection to Boswell, Helminiak (2004:65) references the LXX terminology, questioning why other terms like ἀνομία "wickedness", ἀσέβεια "ungodliness", or πορνεία "immorality" were not utilized for the translation of "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה in 18:22 or 20:13, instead of βδέλυγμα with its cultic overtones. In short, like Boswell, Helminiak limits "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה solely to a purity definition that signals the trespassing of societal boundaries that are meant to keep Israel separate from her neighbours. This lexical approach enables Helminiak to conclude, "Evidently, the Jews of that pre-Christian era did not understand Leviticus to forbid male-male intercourse as something wrong in itself" (Helminiak, 2004:65).

The commonality between these various definitions is that they all see "abomination" as a term circumscribed in the purity/cultic context, involving a breach of idolatry. It is this context that prevents a definition of "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה that includes an ethical/moral sense and reduces the male-male violation to nothing more egregious than an unintentional issue of blood or mould on the bedroom walls. In the pro-gay way of reckoning, "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה is nothing more than a strong expression of shame uttered when some "divinely sanctioned boundary" is transgressed (Nissinen, 1998:39). In the case of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה is a purity violation that mimics the pagan fertility cults; this defiles the participants and pollutes the land, endangering the whole of the nation. Despite subtle variations, pro-gay scholars are agreed on this theme.[34]

[34] Pro-gay interpreters evade the broad semantic range of תּוֹעֵבָה, which will be considered in Chapter 3. By operating from a narrowly defined lexical range, pro-gay interpreters can avoid the moral implications of the "abomination" mentioned. If the word has only a cultic/purity implication in the given context 18:22 and 20:13, then this fails to account for the severity of the punishment meted out for what was deemed a capital offense. Furthermore, it is obvious from the context of 18:26-30, where the plural usages of the word are found in Leviticus, that the other sexual proscriptions of Leviticus 18 are included in the abomination. Using pro-gay logic, can one then say incest, adultery, and bestiality amount to nothing beyond mere purity violations like those found in Leviticus 11-15?

2.3.3.2 Various pro-gay syntagmatic observations

Among pro-gay scholars there are some interesting grammatical and syntactical observations offered in an effort to support the different pro-gay perspectives on the exact meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. The following four unique observations are representative of the syntactical deductions made by pro-gay interpreters:

2.3.3.2.1 Stewart's metonymy view

Stewart (2006:96) promotes the idea that Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are really addressing male-male incest. Stewart argues, since the phrase "lyings-of-a-woman" in 18:22 and 20:13 is a "deep structure of metaphor". This, he believes, refers metonymically to incest as its object.[35]

Stewart (2006:97) bases this metonymy view on the plural nature of "lyings", which he says is always equated with incest in similar parallel texts like Genesis 49:40: "'the lyings [plural] of your father (a male)' means 'incest with the (step) mother'". Additionally, Stewart (2006:97) contends that when the singular sense of "lying" is used (Nm 31:17-18, 35; Jdg 21:11-12), it is always used in reference to a man lying with a woman. From this he concludes that the plural "lyings" "assumes the sexual agency of the male alone" (Stewart, 2006:97) and that the phrase alludes to the "woman" only through the device of metonymy. Then, when viewed in the textual context of incest just prior to 18:22 (18:7-16), he thinks this strengthens his overall argument. To illustrate his point, Stewart cites Hittite Law §189 which forbids a man from committing incest with his son.

The sum of Stewart's (2006:98) assertion is that 18:22 and 20:13 is just an extension and expansion of the numerous incest laws of 18:6-18, which proscribe intercourse between all male relatives in the same way men are prohibited from transgressing incest boundaries with women (18:6-18). This enables Stewart (2006:99) to then conclude that 18:22 and 20:13 do not proscribe all homosexual relations, but only incestuous same-sex unions.

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[35] Kostenberger and Patterson (2011:677-678) define metonymy as the "substitution of one word for another", as does Zuck (1995:150). Kostenberger and Patterson then cite (2011:678) an example from the wedding song of Psalm 45:6, where the term "throne" describes the rule of the king, while the use of "sceptre" displays the power of the king. Both Zuck (1995:150-151) and Terry (1999:160-162) then delineate various nuances of metonymy, with Zuck helpfully outlining (1995:161-165) principles for determining the meaning of figurative language. Stewart's proposal fails to meet the general criteria as outlined in Zuck's rubric for determining the meaning of figurative language in a given context. When compared to grammatical-historical principles for figurative language, like metonymy, Stewart's assertion about the metonymical use of "abomination" in Leviticus 18:22 proves to be forced and contrived.

2.3.3.2.2 Olyan's active partner view

Another syntactical perspective on Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is promoted by Olyan, when he takes the euphemism "lyings-of-a-woman" מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה and compares this to a similar phrase "the-lying-down-of-a-male" מִשְׁכַּב זָכָר found in Numbers 31:17-18, 35 and Judges 21:11-12:

- **Numbers 31:17-18** "Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known *man intimately*. But all the girls who have not *known man intimately*, spare for yourselves."
- **Numbers 31:35** "and of human beings, of the women who had not known *man intimately*, all the persons were 32,000."
- **Judges 21:11-12** "And this is the thing that you shall do: you shall utterly destroy every man and every woman who has *lain with a man*. And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead 400 young virgins who had not known *a man by lying* with him; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan."

In the above passages, Olyan (1994:184) contends that the term מִשְׁכַּב זָכָר specifies the lying down of a male which speaks of vaginal penetration by the man. The phrase was a restricted idiom for "vaginal receptivity". By comparing the מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה construction in Leviticus 18:22 to the related saying in Numbers and Judges, Olyan (1994:185186) determines that the "lyings-of-a-woman" is to be equated with "anal receptivity", in which only the active party is guilty (cf. Helminiak, 2004:59). Olyan (1994:186-187) makes this deduction because the "you" in 18:22 is masculine singular and is therefore only addressing the penetrator, whereas the "you" in 20:13 is redacted into the plural sense of the word in order to condemn both parties.

Based on this argument, Olyan (1994:206) then conjectures that, originally, in 18:22, only the active male was culpable, probably because he was guilty of "feminizing" the passive partner, resulting in the confusion of his gender boundary. It was only in the second stage of redacted writing that both parties were pronounced guilty, possibly because of mixing semen with a defiling agent, excrement (Olyan, 1994:205). In this, purity concerns were certainly violated.

2.3.3.2.3 Stiebert and Walsh's passive partner view

Another important grammatical/syntactical argument to be considered is that of Stiebert and Walsh, which will be analysed in conjunction with Walsh's article, because it entertains the same view. Unlike Olyan, Stiebert and Walsh have an interpretation of the phrase "lyings of a woman" (Lv 18:22; 20:13) which they maintain only excludes a man from taking the passive role in male-male activity (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:137-138; cf. Walsh, 2001:205). This is in contrast with Olyan's emphasis on the active party in this male-male coupling.

To substantiate this view, both Stiebert and Walsh (2001), and Walsh (2001), appeal to a syntactical construct found in Numbers 31:17-18, 35 and Judges 21:11-12: מִשְׁכַּב זָכָר and compare it with the use of the verb "known" יֹדַעַת that precedes מִשְׁכְּבֵ זָכָר (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:137-138; Walsh, 2001:205). Both articles note that "known" refers to the aspect of the woman's "experience", and Stiebert and Walsh emphasize "the sexual experience that differentiates the virginal woman from the non-virginal woman. Conversely, then, one can infer that 'the lying of a woman' is probably the passive role, the role of the one penetrated" (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:137). This is why they both come to a different conclusion from Olyan on the identity of the presumed original guilty party in 18:22.

In support of this, Stiebert and Walsh argue that the term "male" זָכָר, instead of "man" אִישׁ, (18:22) displays a contrast in roles between the two parties rather than emphasizing the same gender of both parties (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:138). By extrapolating, Walsh includes the added observation that the idea of a man who "lies … the lying down of woman" in 18:22 and 20:13 is a "cognate direct object construction" (Walsh, 2001:205). This is what Waltke and O' Connor (1990:167) refers to as a "cognate internal accusative".[36] As Walsh (2001:205) explains, this particular syntactical construction is descriptive of the action as performed by the subject, so the focus of this construct is not the subject's receipt of action from another party, but the subject as the expression of his or her own action. Walsh (2001:205) illustrates his point of the cognate internal construction with the following examples: "to dream a dream" or "to sin a sin". Applied to 18:22 and 20:13, it would imply that the one singled out for guilt in such a union is the one who performs the lying down of a woman. In this scenario, the passive party bears the guilt (Walsh, 2001:205).

As seen earlier, this view leads to a very limited meaning that restricts the application of this legislation to a free adult male Israelite who takes the passive role in the 18:22 and 20:13 interchange (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:147; cf. Walsh, 2001:208). In keeping with Olyan, Stiebert and Walsh believe that only in a later redaction (20:13) were both parties held accountable for the action.[37]

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[36] Waltke and O' Connor explain (1990:167) that this construction "is an expression of the verb's action; it is usually anarthrous (i.e., without the article) and may follow or precede the verb. It resembles in sense both the infinitive absolute … and various adverbial accusatives …" Arnold and Choi (2009:15) describe this construct as follows: "The object is an abstract noun of action, and implies as action in most cases identical of the verb … 'they were overcome with fear [literally: they feared a fear]' (Ps 14:5). The object itself may precede the verb … 'Jerusalem sinned grievously [literally: sinned a sin]' (Lam 1:8)."

[37] Like Olyan, Stiebert and Walsh assume much based on unproven speculations that limit the text in awkward ways. The claim that the proscription found in Leviticus 18:22 was originally applied to a free Israelite male who allowed himself to be penetrated anally remains unproven. While focusing on distant cultures like Greece, Rome, and Assyria as points of paradigmatic comparison is dubious, with very limited import given that Israel's sexual

2.3.3.2.4 Milgrom's procreative abstraction view

As a final point, Milgrom's (2000:1565-1570) unique pro-gay grammatical/syntactical argument will be summarized. After recapping many of the pro-gay arguments surrounding Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Milgrom (2000:1567) sees procreation as the overarching theme of all the sexual proscriptions in Leviticus 18. The essence of his argument is that in all the Levitically-cited proscriptions, the common denominator is that of seminal emissions in illicit intercourse (Milgrom, 2000:1567-1568). This results in procreative abstractions that deviate from the norm.

Milgrom (2000:1568) further deduces that the lack of lost bodily fluids is what sanctions lesbian activity. He further contends that the Levitical prohibition is to be applied only to Israel within the borders of the Holy Land (Milgrom, 2000:1786). This is ostensibly related to the punishment detailed in Leviticus 18:24-30, where the guilty nation is to be dislodged from the land. This means that the proscription in 18:22 and 20:13 is not to be applied universally, as many moderns have argued.[38]

In summary, what does the pro-gay exegetical investigation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 look like using the lexical/grammatical principle? Although lexical nuances exist, pro-gay interpreters are agreed that the "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה of 18:22/20:13 is restricted to a definition that demarcates purity and ritualistic cultic violations, all of which distinguish Israel from the pagan fertility cults of her neighbours. Such abominations תּוֹעֵבוֹת threatened Israel's ownership of their God-given land. Because of the purity limits of the abomination, there is no enduring trans-historical or trans-cultural moral principle that can be applied to modern understandings of homosexuality.

In like manner, the pro-gay grammatical/syntactical approaches to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 exhibit some variations: Stewart adopts the position — by appealing to metonymy — that 18:22/20:13 addresses male-male incest, but he fails to explain the guilt of both parties in 20:13. In contrast, Olyan parallels the "lying–of-a-male" מִשְׁכַּב זָכָר (Nm 31:17, 18, 35; Jdg 21:11-12) to the "lyings-of-a-woman" מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה (Lv 18:22; 20:13), which enables him to reason that it was the active party in 18:22 who was originally guilty, before the second-stage redaction *ex post facto* determined that both parties were guilty. In comparison, Stiebert and Walsh (and Walsh)

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proscriptions were actually quite unique amongst the ANE cultures. In contrast, Hess (2008:740) contends that Israel's code on human sexuality was more comprehensive and conservative than that of her neighbours.

[38] In spite of his pro-gay assertions, Milgrom (2000:1566, 1749) does admit that the Levitical same-sex prohibition unequivocally applies to all males within the borders of Israel regardless of age, class, status, or citizenship. He also notes that the "abomination" תּוֹעֵבָה pronounced is of a moral nature, which "serves to primarily characterize the undesirability and unacceptability of the offenses" (Milgrom, 2000:1569-1570). This makes the transgression moral in nature, rather than cultic. Finally, Milgrom (2000:1570) emphasizes that sodomy was not a mere private matter to the ancient Hebrews. It is here that he quotes Gerstenberger to support his contention.

use a similar syntactical method as Olyan to reach a very different conclusion. Namely, that it was originally the passive party who was guilty in 18:22. They then proceed to narrow the meaning of 18:22/20:13 to include only free-born male citizens of Israel who take the passive (feminized) role in male-to-male intercourse. Finally, Milgrom promotes a pro-gay view that focuses on procreative abstractions. Differences aside, on this all pro-gay interpreters are agreed: Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are purely descriptive of ancient Israel and, therefore, have no moral implications for homosexuality as it is known it today.

2.3.4 Pro-gay interpreters and the *analogia fidei*

A helpful component in the grammatical-historical hermeneutic is a principle referred to as the *analogy of the faith* (*analogia fidei*). Terry (1999:449) offers a definition of the *analogy of the faith* as "that general harmony of fundamental doctrine which pervades the entire Scriptures. This assumes that the Bible is a self-interpreting book, and what is obscure in one passage may be illuminated in another". Terry (1999:449-451) then outlines essential parameters for this principle, which ultimately view the Bible as an "organic, theological unity" (cf. Ramm, 1993:56).

When comparing Scripture with Scripture on the homosexual debate, pro-gay interpreters, like grammatical-historical interpreters, reference three primary Old Testament passages outside of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. In some instances, pro-gay interpreters refer to the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2. Then the historical narratives of Genesis 19:1-29 and Judges 19:1-30 are often invoked to lend credence to their claims, while Deuteronomy 23:17-18, with its mention of both female and male cult prostitution, is discussed and examined. Based on this order, what follows is a survey of the pro-gay usage of the analogy of the faith.

2.3.4.1 Pro-gay interpreters and the creation account

Some pro-gay interpreters avoid the creation account altogether (Olyan, 1994; Stiebert and Walsh, 2001; Walsh, 2001). Others, like Nissinen (1998:135-140), make brief mention of it, often as an appendix. In her reference to the creation account, Bird (2000:167) assumes that Genesis 1 and 2 do not "prescribe" hetero-normativity. Instead, the creation text is an "etiology" that describes "why things are the way they are" (Bird, 2000:167).[39] It is Bird's (2000:167) belief that it was Israel's "law and custom" that formed the prevailing culture of sexuality and marriage in ancient Israel, without reference to the creation narrative. Regarding Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Bird argues that these passages are not directly related to the creation motif, due to the

[39] In his commentary on Genesis, Ross (1988:54-56) summarizes the nature of what an etiology is, explaining how it is often associated with a less-than-historical event, and, therefore, not transhistorically binding: "For many critics, an etiological element makes the tradition automatically suspect, for if an etiological factor created the story, it could hardly be historical." By equating the creation account to etiology, Bird can then limit implications of the creation account as non-normative.

use of אִשָּׁה (18:22) in contrast to נְקֵבָה in Genesis 1:28, which is parallel to זָכָר in the Genesis account. Bird questions why both Levitical passages contrast זָכָר with אִשָּׁה instead of נְקֵבָה, like Genesis 1:28. Therefore, she argues that the Levitical legislation is not associated with the creation paradigm, because "it does not appear to echo the creation account or emphasize procreative function, but simply describes the normative pattern of sexual relations" (Bird, 2000:151).

In Cleaver's (1995:63-64) reference to the creation account, he tries to portray a "communal image" of God, which amounts to a dual-gendered nature containing both male and female. From this, Cleaver rationalizes procreation away, maintaining that Eve was created to be a partner, not a mother. Cleaver (1995:66) makes use of the uni-plural nature of the title Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) as proof of this "gynandrous" (i.e., androgynous) God. By reducing God to this gender composite, Cleaver then makes his case that what is important is partnering and community with others. This is not gender-dependent, as God's nature supposedly illustrates. It must be noted that Cleaver's use of Genesis 1:26-28 is not in direct comparison with the Levitical texts. Yet, his reliance on the creation account serves as a hermeneutical grid through which he interprets other passages like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

In both of these pro-gay examples, the creation account is distilled and neutralized.

2.3.4.2 Pro-gay interpretations of narrative accounts

In the pro-gay summation of what the Old Testament has to say about homosexuality, pro-gay interpreters factor the narrative accounts of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19) and the Levite of Judges 19 into their final equation on the subject.

In the account of Sodom and Gomorrah, Bird (2000:147) sees the display of moral depravity by the Sodomites (Gen. 19:1-11) as an indictment against their "inhospitality" evidenced toward the angelic visitors. In the process, the Sodomites dishonoured Lot's guests by threatening their honour as males with the spectre of homosexual rape (Bird, 2000:148). Likewise, Stiebert and Walsh (2001:130) see sexual intent in the term "know" יָדַע in Genesis 19:5, but they associate this with the honour-shame model, which focuses on the de-masculinization of the proposed homosexual rape. In this, Lot's guests will be shamed as they are forced into a female role (cf. Nissinen, 1998:26). The motive for this aggression, according to Stiebert and Walsh (2001:131), is the desire to demonstrate their supremacy and power over Lot's visitors.

In another variation of the Sodom theme, Boswell uniquely submits that what is at stake in Genesis 19:1-11 is nothing more than a hospitality shibboleth, with the male Sodomites just

wanting to become better acquainted with Lot's visitors. He founds this interpretation on his definition of "to know" יָדַע, which he equates with hospitality, i.e., becoming acquainted with these foreign men Lot is sheltering (Boswell, 1981:93-94). Clearly, Boswell does not see any sexual connotation attached to the usage of "to know" in 19:5, in spite of an undeniable sexual meaning attached to the same word יָדַע three verses later (19:8). In an interesting summary of the Genesis 19 account, Nissinen (1998:48) surmises that the attempted gang rape stemmed from "phallic aggression" spawned by "xenophobic arrogance".

The parallel reference in Judges 19 bears many similarities (Nissinen, 1998:50) to Genesis 19. In this narrative, a Levite and his concubine were given shelter when they arrived in Gibeah. As in the Sodom account (Gn 19:1-11), local Benjamite men from Gibeah beat on the door, demanding the Levite go out to the angry mob that they might "know" יָדַע him (Jdg. 19:22). In the end, it was the Levite's concubine who was sent out to the immoral gang, who in turn abused her until dawn's early light, with the tragic result that she died. Nissinen (1998:51) concludes that, since gender roles were not transgressed, the crime of rape against the concubine was less egregious than if the Levite had been raped, because no one's masculinity was directly shamed (cf. Bird 2000:149). Again, Stiebert and Walsh (2001:134) declare that what is central to both the Sodom account and this account is the abuse of "gender and power". In their estimation, the Levite is vicariously shamed and dishonoured through the repeated rape of his concubine. This, they say, sparked the Israelite retaliation against the Benjamites in Judges 20 (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:135).[40]

It is quite apparent that pro-gay scholars do not see any meaningful connection between what happened in Sodom and what followed in Gibeah, and homosexuality as it is currently understood. This is consistent with their understanding and interpretation of the Levitical legislation found in 18:22 and 20:13.

2.3.4.3 Pro-gay interpretations of ancient cultic prostitution

One important Pentateuchal cross-reference pro-gay interpreters are compelled to engage is Deuteronomy 23:17-18 (Hebrew 18-19):

"None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute. You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the wages of a dog into the house of the LORD your God for any votive offering, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God."

[40] In her commentary on Judges 19, Niditch (1982:374) concludes that marital and sexual irregularities evidence a culture on its way to societal and political disintegration, with moral disintegration as the catalyst. This requires the responsible members of society punishing the irresponsible members for the good of the whole.

The pro-gay procedure for dealing with this passage is somewhat varied, like many of the treatments already examined. In one instance, Stone (1997:37-38) insists that the idea of cultic prostitution is a "conflation" which amounts to a "symbolic self-definition" on the part of Israel to castigate their neighbours with an unflattering caricature. In other words, the reference in Deuteronomy 23:17-18 is a literary device, not a historical recitation. It was a way Israel could demean and denigrate the surrounding nations by relating fictitious details regarding their neighbours' sexual antics (Stone, 1997:38).[41]

Bird (1997:37) voices a similar sentiment in an essay she wrote on the subject. Despite her conviction, Bird (2000:171) comments that this prohibition was probably a device employed to forbid sexual commerce at the temple of Yahweh. She defends her thesis by countering that Deuteronomy 23:17-18 records no known aspects of the Canaanite cultus, or any other alien cultus for that matter. In addition, the female and male cult prostitutes identified as קְדֵשָׁה and קָדֵשׁ are discovered only in polemical contexts in the Old Testament with the feminine use of "prostitute" זוֹנָה (Gn 38:21-22; Hs 4:14), which in every instance describes Israel "stigmatizing" her neighbours with prostitution (Bird, 2000:171). Despite the many modern scholarly references to this being an element of Canaanite religion, Bird (2000:172) is adamant that "no such institution is known". What of the other Old Testament references to cult prostitution (1 Ki 14:24; 15:12; 22:46 [Hebrew 47]; 2 Ki 23:7)? Bird (2000:172) remarks, these passages are devoid of any "contextual association with prostitution or sex and are dependent on Deuteronomy 23:18 for their interpretation". To Bird's way of thinking, the whole idea of cultic prostitution was but a scribal amendment meant to portray Israel's neighbours in an unfavourable light.

For his part, Nissinen (1998:40) cites Bird, stating that cultic prostitution "may be literary rather than historical". He does add that, whether fiction or non-fiction, the Deuteronomic writer(s) were probably making reference to the *kurgarrus*, *assinnus*, and Syrian *galli*, who were all Ancient Near Eastern pagan priests who assumed an androgynous gender role which was then "expressed" in "their lifelong dedication to a deity" (Nissinen,1998:41; cf. Bird, 2000:173). He is uncertain whether this means they were transvestites, castrated, or engaged in homosexual acts, as the evidence is only "circumstantial" (Nissinen, 1998:41).

In another variation of cultic prostitution, Countryman (1990:38-39) explains that the emphasis of Deuteronomy 23:17-18 highlights the prohibition for Israelite men to consign their children to

[41] A modern-day example of this shaming tactic was witnessed when arch-pornographer Larry Flynt falsely accused Jerry Falwell's (former leader of the Moral Majority and Liberty University in the USA) mother of questionable morals for the sake of impugning the leader of the Moral Majority.

a life of prostitution. He goes so far as to say that the Torah never "explicitly condemns men who visit prostitutes" (Countryman, 1990:38).[42] Along with homosexuality, cross-dressing, and bestiality, the proscription against prostitution amounts to nothing more than an ancient purity offence for which there is no modern application (Countryman, 1990:39).

Whether one agrees with them or not, pro-gay interpreters are consistent with their hermeneutical assumptions and in harmony with their interpretational paradigm when they compare Scripture with Scripture. From the creation account to Sodom and Gibeah, and in their evaluation of cultic prostitution, pro-gay scholars use creative and sophisticated arguments to obfuscate the issue of homosexuality. Predicated on their hermeneutical assumptions, their assessment of contextual issues, their cultural/historical understanding, their use of the grammatical/lexical principle, and their implementation of the analogy of the faith, the pro-gay applications and conclusions will finally be considered next.

2.3.5 Pro-gay interpreters and application

Traditionally, application has been a separate discipline, subsequent to the hermeneutical process. Shealy (2002:165-194) helpfully recounts the reasons and importance of maintaining the hermeneutic/application distinction undiluted. In more recent times, says Shealy, application has been absorbed into the hermeneutical process, blurring lines that are now routinely crossed, as the quest for the practical often drives interpretation to the desired pragmatic end. Failure to make the hermeneutic/application distinction results in putting the hermeneutical cart before the hermeneutical horse.

As the pro-gay applications of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are revealed, it is essential to retain the admonition of Terry (1999:470), who reminds his readers: "There can be no true application, and no profitable taking to ourselves of any lessons of the Bible, unless we first clearly apprehend their original meaning and reference. To build a moral lesson upon an erroneous interpretation of the language of God's word is a reprehensible procedure … To misinterpret the sacred writer is to discredit any application one may make of his words." It is only by way of sound interpretation that a credible *ex post facto* application can be rightly attained.

Admittedly, the pro-gay conclusions are many and diverse, but for the purposes of this dissertation, six applicational categories will be discussed: (1) the anachronistic use of Leviticus;

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[42] Of course, one could counter Countryman with the obvious fact that there are many forms of sexual distortion that the Bible never mentions "explicitly", like paedophilia, which is never "explicitly" mentioned in Scripture. In keeping with Countryman's canons of logic, it could be deduced that paedophilia must, therefore, be within the realm of permissibility. The question is whether a sexual transgression must be "explicitly" mentioned for it to be proscribed? In all of this, somehow Proverbs 5 and 6, with their direct warnings against prostitution, also escape Countryman's notice.

(2) the absence of lesbianism in the text; (3) the implications of social justice and equality; (4) the abandonment of moral absolutes; (5) the appropriation of human discovery; and (6) the pro-gay reliance on a love ethic.

2.3.5.1 Pro-gay application: Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are anachronistic today

The conclusion that Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are anachronistic is a result of today's fuller-orbed understanding of homosexuality. This contention is dominant among pro-gay scholars. It is articulated in a number of ways, five of which will be briefly examined here:

- Leviticus is historically and culturally conditioned to its time, place, and people, with no explicit relevance for the 21st-century culture and mind-set (Bird, 2000:168). The Bible simply does not entertain current knowledge about sexuality, and homosexuality in particular. In the end, the Levitical laws are "historically conditioned" (18:6-23; 20:10-21) to "reflect" ancient Israel's evolving understanding of sexuality as a reaction to their own "changing sexual, political, and religious conditions" in response to their previous captivity (Bird, 2000:155). Even the Israelite concept of holiness was "culturally derived" to foster national identity and community (Bird, 2000:156; Nissinen, 1998:42). Thus, there is both a historical and cultural divide that seemingly cannot be bridged. All of this is quite reminiscent of Gotthold Lessing's Impassable Ditch between the Bible and human reason (Larkin, 1988:33-34).[43]

- The pro-gay position that Levitical legislation is conditioned by purity themes is another argument that justifies their anachronistic outlook on the Bible's portrayal of homosexuality. Because Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are designated as purity laws, Countryman, among others, is certain there is nothing prescriptive about them (1990:13; cf. Helminiak, 2004:55; Olyan, 1994:204; Van der Kooij, 2001:256). Hence, Leviticus does not construct a trans-cultural and trans-historical moral code that is still in perpetuity (Germond, 1997:218). Due to the purity-cultic emphasis, to apply these Levitical laws to homosexuality today would be tantamount to legislating against a man's consumption of rare steak while wearing a polyester leisure suit prior to his physical intimacy with his menstruating wife (Germond, 1997:218).[44] Unlike ancient Israel,

[43]Larkin (1988:33-34) explains that Lessing believed that the truth of the Bible could not be trusted and could not be accepted as a binding authority. Because all Scripture is historically conditioned and its truthfulness can never be proved by autonomous human reason, the Bible must be subordinated to reason, resulting in a broad ditch without the possibility of a bridge. Like many of the postmodern hermeneutical methods, Lessing's conclusion leads to a great deal of hermeneutical suspicion that often borders on hermeneutical cynicism.

[44] It is notable that pro-gay interpreters avoid the implications of consistently applying this anachronistic notion to the other sexual proscriptions in the Levitical context of 18-20. If they were hermeneutically consistent, almost any perceived sexual distortion could be reinterpreted and reframed with an air of respectability.

homosexual acts in contemporary society do not defile the individual or the nation, nor pollute the land (Frymer-Kensky, 1988:12).

- Closely related to the two previous points, pro-gay interpreters believe Leviticus is "irrelevant" to the homosexuality debate, as this is an ancient purity-cultic issue (Boswell, 1981:105; Helminiak, 2004:56). It is only those who are prejudicially predisposed against homosexuality (i.e., homophobic) who cling to those texts which seemingly support their bias (Boswell, 1981:105). Germond (1997:192) reasons that all of the Torah with its legal requirements has been displaced by the work of Jesus. This begs the question of whether Christ, by fulfilling the Law, superseded the Law entirely, or transformed it into the Law of Christ?[45]

- Another pro-gay trajectory uses the honour-shame model (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:119-152; Walsh, 2001:201-209) to make patriarchy and male honour the cardinal issue being addressed by the Levitical passages (Nissinen, 1998:41-43). This focuses on the maintenance of masculine (active) and feminine (passive) sexual gender roles the concern. Again, this relegates the Levitical passages to the cultural past, with no implications for the present debate.

- In very close association with the preceding, pro-gay interpreters indicate a very narrow and limited meaning for Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Olyan (1994:204) affirms that 18:22/20:13 do not reference other homosexual acts beyond his narrow scope. While Stiebert and Walsh see no other application beyond the transgression of a free-born male Israelite citizen subordinating himself to the passive role in male-male intimacy (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:145; Walsh, 2001:208). In probing the reach of 18:22/20:13, Walsh (2001:209) queries whether two male slaves were included in such a prohibition. Ostensibly, according to Walsh (2001:209), as long as there was no penetration, other male-male "expressions of affection" were probably permissible.

2.3.5.2 Pro-gay application: Lesbianism in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

The absence of the mention of women in 18:22/20:13 is seen by pro-gay interpreters as the sanction for lesbianism[46] (Milgrom, 2000:1568; Stewart, 2006:82; Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:121). Pro-gay rationale concludes that the narrow scope of the proscription in 18:22/20:13 references only homosexual acts where male honour is tarnished (Bird, 2000:152; Nissinen, 1998:41). Because no penetration is present, Helminiak reasons that

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[45] See Chapter 4 for greater explanation on the relationship between the two testaments as it relates to Mosaic law.
[46] This subject will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7, dealing with the application of the grammatical-historical method and, among other aspects of this issue, its relationship to the issue of lesbianism in Leviticus 18:22/20:13.

lesbianism is not prohibited by the Levitical injunctions (2004:59-60). For her part, Frymer-Kensky (1988:96-97; 1992:1145-1146) believes that because Leviticus does not broach the subject, woman-woman coupling is a moot and trivial matter. In what amounts to an argument from silence, pro-gay interpreters conclude too much.

2.3.5.3 Pro-gay application: Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 and social justice

The addition of social justice concerns is seen as indispensable by some pro-gay interpreters. This is not surprising given the sympathies some pro-gay proponents have for Liberation Theology categories and a hermeneutic of liberation (e.g., Bird, Cleaver, Edwards, Germond, and Miller). According to this thinking, there is no individual sin or salvation, only collective sin and redemption rooted in the ideological constructs of society (Cleaver, 1995:19, 39). For justice and equality to prevail for all the oppressed, the hermeneutic circle is employed to confront and replace existing structures. It is for this reason that the prevailing homophobic hermeneutic must be replaced with the more inclusive and egalitarian construct. This will promote and allow true equality to emerge (Miller, 1989:136). Inherent to this paradigm is a constitution of hermeneutical revolution.

2.3.5.4 Pro-gay application: Homosexuality and sexual relativism

The abandonment of moral absolutes also informs the pro-gay conclusions. The subtle implication promoted by pro-gay scholars is that truth is fluid and dynamic, and for this reason moral truth is never absolutely fixed. Instead, moral truth is evolving as it converses with new communities. This is clear from the following pro-gay assessments. Society, Countryman (1990:18) argues, will never come to “a final resolution” on the matter of sexuality and specifically homosexuality. So the best society can do is to “find a sustainable balance”. Given the dynamic constitution of theology, Cleaver (1995:10-13) is convinced that conclusions on this matter are elusive, owing to the unachievability of certitude. It must be remembered, Edwards (1984:12) insists use of the hermeneutic circle ensures that there is never a “final completion of the text”. Consequently, truth is like a moving target, or a goal post that is never stationary. Van der Kooij (2001:256) adds that in a “pluriform society”, different opinions should be allowed. While different opinions should always be allowed, does this mean all opinions should be given the same weight and attention? This, Van der Kooij does not qualify.

2.3.5.5 Pro-gay application: Homosexuality, human reason and experience

Pro-gay interpreters often stress human reason and human experience[47] above the Scriptures. The appropriation of human reason and human experience by pro-gay interpreters is not wrong in itself. The question to be asked is what place and priority should human reason, with its associated disciplines, be given in light of divine revelation? Edwards (1984:13) believes that biblical interpretation should always be considered alongside of "human reflection and discovery".[48] But, does this mean subjugating divine reason to human speculation? As has already been seen, pro-gay interpreters begin the hermeneutical enterprise with the assumption that sexual orientation is settled science and a biological imperative. In this, does revelation submit to reason, or is reason supplanted by divine revelation? In Chapter 7, this will be given greater consideration.

2.3.5.6 Pro-gay application: Love conquers all

One common denominator among most pro-gay interpreters (Cleaver, 1995:66; Du Toit, 2002:107; Furnish, 1994:32; Miller, 1996:58-60; Rogers, 2006:62-63; Van der Kooij, 2001:256) is their emphasis on what might be called a hermeneutic of love.[49] This results in love being an overriding consideration in the final or ultimate interpretation of the passage.[50] Wink (cited by Rogers, 2006:63) goes so far as to claim, "The Bible knows only a love ethic which is constantly being brought to bear on whatever sexual mores are dominant in any given country, or culture, or period." The aim of this love emphasis, say pro-gay advocates like Rogers (2006:62), is so that people do not get hurt by the interpretation. Yet, by placing so much weight on the love hermeneutic, pro-gay interpreters run the risk of making "love" the overriding norm for determining sexual ethics (Grenz, 1998:92-93).

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[47] In Mtshiselwa's (2010:775) assessment, he bases his hermeneutical reasoning on the subjective slope of human experience, making the homosexual's experience absolute and bending Scripture to that experience.

[48] In his response to Boswell's pro-gay claims regarding Romans 1:18-32, Hays (1986:207-209) discusses and distinguishes four sources of authority: the Bible, tradition, reason, and experience. Those who disparage biblical authority will tend toward emphasizing these other authorities to the detriment of biblical authority. In the case of pro-gay interpreters, human reason and experience normally receive the weight of emphasis. While all four elements are important and have their place, when Scripture is devalued, then reason and experience tend to redefine and redraw moral boundaries. Du Toit (2003:104-105) alludes to this dilemma as well when he explicates his own hermeneutical observations in light of his exegesis of Romans 1.

[49] See 2.3.2.2 and Footnote 14 of this chapter.

[50] In his fine exegesis of Romans 1:18-32 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Du Toit (2003:106) concludes that "all homosexual promiscuity, like heterosexual promiscuity, should be radically rejected". Then, in the next breath, Du Toit (2003:107) reasons that "if a choice must be made between the biblical position on homosexuality and the love commandment — and such a choice is often inevitable — the latter must receive precedence". The implication here is that one cannot be truly loving and apply the biblical prohibition simultaneously.

2.4 Summary

Countryman (1990:16) well represents the practical application of pro-gay hermeneutics and exegesis with his paradigm for modern sexual purity claims. Based on his understanding of the Levitical passages, among other biblical texts, Countryman outlines the following three principles in formulating a contemporary sexual ethic with reference to homosexuality:

1. Sexual ethics is to be considered an individual matter of opinion.
2. Any sexual act is permissible so long as no one gets hurt or is harmed.
3. Because sexual ethics is an individual matter, correspondingly there is no universal standard that applies (i.e., there are no absolutes).

So it would seem that pro-gay assumptions combined with pro-gay exegesis produce results that are as subjective as they are relative.

In summary, Mtshiselwa's (2010:785) contention well epitomizes the pro-gay hermeneutic: "The historical and cultural distance between the 21st century South African context and times of ancient text production do not play a significant role in the … discussion of homosexuality and Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 … differing ideological contestations … [and] discussions offer no substantial and sound rationale to reject homosexuality. But homosexuality as a love relationship is not a factor that the author of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 was concerned about either. The lack of reference to homosexuality as a sexual orientation and a love relationship in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 presents a major obstacle in accepting Scripture as normative in the discussion of homosexuality."

3 HERMENEUTICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND EXEGETICAL METHODS OF GRAMMATICAL-HISTORICAL PRACTITIONERS IN LEVITICUS 18:22 AND 20:13 EXAMINED

Given the high degree of hermeneutical suspicion pro-gay interpreters employ when interpreting biblical texts like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, one might well ask if "… it is possible to say what constitutes the valid meaning of a text?" (Virkler & Ayayo, 2007:22). Is it ever possible to arrive at a confident level of certitude related to the meaning of the text(s) in question, and then apply that meaning to the issue of homosexuality as it is understood today? According to the grammatical-historical hermeneutic, it is. This is only possible, however, when the rules for a literal biblical interpretation are thoroughly and consistently used, and the derived meaning of the text is rightly applied.

How does the grammatical-historical method differ from the pro-gay hermeneutic? The answer to this inquiry is really the purpose of this chapter, as the grammatical-historical assumptions are examined and the exegetical rules for interpretation applied to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. In keeping with this purpose, it is critical to examine the grammatical-historical starting point with the array of bibliological presuppositions that serve as the cornerstone of the literal method. Then, as in Chapter 2, the same hermeneutical categories will be considered from a distinctively grammatical-historical viewpoint, as the various facets of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are investigated in accordance with the literal approach.

3.1 The grammatical-historical starting point considered

What truly distinguishes the literal method of interpretation from the pro-gay method is evidenced at the starting line of grammatical-historical interpreters, who embrace a high view of Scripture. In fact, the definition for the grammatical-historical method takes its cue from the presuppositions related to the authoritative nature and importance of Scripture. For the purposes of this dissertation, the following bibliological assumptions will be surveyed as they relate to the formation of the grammatical-historical definition: (1) the authority of the Bible; (2) the dual authorship of the Bible; (3) the authorial intent of Scripture; (4) the singular sense of the Bible; (5) and the distinct process of application of meaning — all of which form the framework upon which the literal method heavily relies.

3.1.1 The assumption of biblical authority

The spring of the grammatical-historical hermeneutic is founded in the tradition of *sola Scriptura,* which Kaiser (1996a:51) notes is "a governing principle of all orthodox hermeneutics". To this same end, Packer (1992:349) concludes that the grammatical-historical method is

"dictated … by the doctrine of inspiration." It is this solidified belief in the Bible as a God-breathed (i.e., inspired) book that leads the grammatical-historical interpreter to conclude that the Bible presupposes the divine authority of God Himself.[1] It is a high view of the Bible which promotes the imperative of "good hermeneutics" (Corely *et al.*, 2002:190-191) in which the literal method seeks the normal, ordinary sense of the passage under investigation.[2]

Rather than beginning the hermeneutical enterprise from the present-day cultural vantage point, those who are convinced of the Bible's uniqueness and divine authority begin their interpretational quest in the era of the text under consideration. In this way, timeless truths of the text might be mined and then examined for personal application.[3]

Many of the grammatical-historical interpreters categorically state their commitment to biblical authority in the preamble of their treatments of the biblical texts that address homosexuality. DeYoung (2000:29) maintains that the "interpreter's attitude" related to biblical authority "is critical", because the revisionists obfuscate Old Testament authority, consequently dismissing the idea of any binding moral address on passages like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.[4] Haas (1999:1) states that the premise for his treatment on homosexuality and the related biblical passages is directly related to "those biblical interpretations which claim that an acceptance of the authority of the Bible does not require the conclusion that homosexual relations between adults are wrong"; clearly Haas holds to a high view of Scripture. Oswalt (1979:20) references the Bible's "ultimate source" being "in God", which means that Scripture "reveals God's patterns for moral behavior" (Oswalt, 1979:19); again, the authority of God's word is an evident starting place. For his part, Wold (1998:22) unapologetically declares that the Bible is explicitly "against

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[1] In his article, *Authorial intent*, William Arp (2000:38) ably illustrates the grammatical-historical presupposition of biblical authority. In his very first point he clearly delineates his firmly held conviction that the Bible is inspired and, therefore, authoritative, because "the authority of Scripture is the divine authority of God Himself speaking. It is his revealed will. Revelation results in authority". Arp (2000:38-39) concludes that the Bible is sufficient and complete (2 Tm 3:17), providing all the believer in Christ needs to live a godly and righteous life. It is this rationale that should serve as a catalyst for discovering the biblical author's intended meaning.

[2] Corely *et al.,* (2002:190) insightfully note that there is a correlation between a strong view of inspiration and an interpretational approach of the Scriptures that they describe as the "hermeneutic of affirmation", as opposed to the "hermeneutic of suspicion", which is how one might describe pro-gay interpreters.

[3] If one is seeking the authorial intent of the passage, then it would be anachronistic to impose scientific findings of the present onto the text (Corely *et al.,* 2002:191). As has already been demonstrated in Chapter 2, it is not uncommon for pro-gay interpreters to begin the hermeneutical process with science. This is not to discount the scientific process or other pertinent human discoveries, but to consider such during the application phase, once the meaning of the text has been determined. On this point Taylor (1995:7) wisely cautions that the best science can do is describe what is, not what ought to be morally.

[4] DeYoung (2000:30) believes that the hermeneutical starting point for pro-gay interpreters resides in the subjective impetus of experience, which endeavours to make contemporary culture the "determinative criterion for truth", amounting to "modern sexology" correcting "the Bible".

… consensual sex between males", because the Bible is unmistakable and unequivocal in its prohibition of such behaviour. In similar vein, White and Niell (2002:15-18) emphasize the crux of the same-sex debate is manifestly focused on biblical authority and the related interpretation of the pertinent passages. For these reasons, grammatical-historical exegetes confidently aver that the Bible is God's authoritative, divine standard for truth and morality on all things sexual.

3.1.2 The assumption of dual authority

In close association with a high view of Scripture, is the related topic of the dual authorship of the Bible. Dual authorship underscores the concurrent involvement of both the divine and human elements in inspiration. At stake here is whether or not dual authorship implies that God overrode the human element by offering a deeper, hidden meaning. This is often referred to as *sensus plenior*, i.e., "fuller meaning".[5] This facet of the debate is crucial for the reason that divine meaning and human meaning in the text should be one and the same. If divine meaning exceeds human meaning, how does one really know or discern this? Conversely, if human meaning exceeds divine meaning, then the doctrine of inspiration is compromised.[6] Kaiser (2007:63-66) cautions that only by way of the grammatical-historical approach can an interpreter actually uncover what the text means. His conclusion is that both the divine meaning and human meaning must merge into one and the same, otherwise the grammatical-historical methodology is eclipsed by a subjective element. This elevates the interpreter above the biblical author's meaning.

3.1.3 The assumption of authorial intent

The discussion of authorial intention is simply a way of describing the ultimate goal of biblical interpretation, which is "to discover what the text meant in the mind of its original author for his intended audience" (Arp, 2000:39). Dockery (1992:171) refers to this as the "author-oriented perspective". In brief, the objective of the author-oriented approach pursues textual meaning in the words and context of the one who authored the text, not outside of what was written. This is a constituent element of the grammatical-historical hermeneutic. To divorce the writer from what he wrote is, as Hirsch (1967:5-6) warned, "to reject the only compelling normative principle that

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[5] For a fuller treatment on the debate related to *sensus plenior* versus singular meaning, see Moo (1986:179-211) and Riggs (1986:213-227).Closely related to this discussion is an article by Christopher (2010:35-39), which recounts how an aberrant view of dual authority led G.C. Berkouwer to conclude that human involvement leads to a diminishment of the divine aspects of inspiration, resulting in "unintentional errors" (Christopher, 2010:38) in matters other than redemptive. It is no mere coincidence that pro-gay interpreter Jack Rogers is a disciple of Berkouwer. Rogers, joined by McKim, advanced Berkouwer's thesis in their book *The authority and interpretation of the Bible* (1979). Armed with the same sentiment, Rogers wrote his pro-gay assessment of homosexuality and same-sex marriage in 2006.

[6] See the article by Krabbendam (1980: 413-446), contrasting the opposing views of inspiration between B.B. Warfield and G.C. Berkouwer.

could lend validity to an interpretation …". To go beyond the meaning the author intended is to replace that intended meaning with something other than what was originally intended[7] with an imposed meaning.

This understanding of authorial intention helps provide the backbone for the grammatical-historical methodology. The rules derived from the literal method reflect a careful attention to preserving the original intent and meaning of the author, because they are deemed authoritative. The observance of authorial intention then serves as prophylactic against the all too common What-it-means-to-me approach — an approach that views the text in isolation from its author.[8] Once separated from authorial intent, a text can mean virtually anything the interpreter wishes it to mean, as authority shifts from the meaning of the text to the interpreter. This is precisely what the grammatical-historical hermeneutic strives to avoid.

3.1.4 The assumption of the singular sense of Scripture

In close harmony with the preceding foundational assumptions of the grammatical-historical method of exegesis, is the importance of the principle of a single meaning of the text.[9] This is to say that a given text has one meaning "and one meaning only" (Thomas, 2002:141). Long ago, Terry (1999:103) emphasized the crucial import of this long-accepted principle of the grammatical-historical method: "A fundamental principle in grammatico-historical exposition is that words and sentences can have only one significance in one and the same connection. The moment we neglect this principle we drift out upon a sea of uncertainty and conjecture."

Grammatical-historical interpreters committed to this principle are careful to qualify their adherence to the singular sense of a passage with the age-old caveat that, while the meaning of a text is limited to one meaning — unless the text indicates otherwise — the applications of that same text are many and varied (Ramm, 1993:113; Thomas, 2002:142). *Summit II of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy* (Article VII) unambiguously promotes and subscribes to this principle: "We affirm that the meaning expressed in each biblical text is single, definite

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[7] Arp (2000:40) explains what is meant by the "author's intention" implying that the author of a given biblical text was conscious of what he was writing under inspiration, using words, language, and a referent that all reflect that conscious intention. In like manner, Dockery (1992:171-172) paraphrases Hirsch's thought on authorial intention, explaining that the "task of the interpreter is to understand what an author meant at the time of writing. This is possible because the text's meaning is controlled by language conventions which exist between the speaker and hearer, or author and reader".

[8] Hirsch (1967:10-11) illustrates the folly of divorcing a text from its author when he refers to the poet T.S. Eliot, who believed his poetic works had a life of their own completely detached from his original intention. To be consistent, then, Eliot's belief meant that he could never complain when his works were misinterpreted. Given Eliot's view, one could argue Eliot could never be misinterpreted, because his poems had has many meanings as they had readers.

[9] See Kaiser (1996c:158-170) for expanded commentary on the singular sense of Scripture.

and fixed. We deny that the recognition of this singular meaning eliminates the variety of its application."[10]

Once this principle of singular sense is accepted and applied to the exegetical process, it means the interpreter is only seeking the author's established and unalterable meaning before proceeding to the application of the consequent meaning.

3.1.5 The assumption that applying the text

The critical nature of this principle cannot be underestimated. It is vital to maintain the clear distinction between "the set of rules for biblical interpretation" and the subsequent process of "application" (Shealy, 2002:166). Kaiser (1980:122) echoes essentially the same sentiment, seeing the application of an "author's words" as "distinct and secondary" from the grammatical-historical process. The desire to start the hermeneutical process from the point of application amounts to the proverbial "tail wagging the dog" (Shealy, 2002:176-177), or fronting the text with present-day cultural milieu before adequately interpreting the text. The analogy of the cart before the horse fits well here.

The danger of introducing application too early into the grammatical-historical process is that it opens the door wide for the prevalence of subjectivity to cloud the meaning the author intended, thereby altering that meaning. This is not to diminish the application of a passage, but rather to relegate it to its proper place, so that the interpreter does not jump the gun, as it were.[11] In other words, like a recipe with its special ingredients that must be added at just the right time, application should remain at the end of the queue so the recipe is not potentially spoiled. With this in mind, Shealy (2002:187) defines application as "the use or practice of God's message in personal life, which lies outside the disciplines used to determine meaning."[12]

Failure to heed this critical tenet of the literal method invites the temptation to commence hermeneutics from the interpreter's horizon, travelling in the wrong direction down a one-way street.

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[10] Because many practitioners of the grammatical-historical method have drifted from the principle of singular meaning of a text and opted to include more subjective elements into their hermeneutical methodology, like *sensus plenior*, Kaiser (1996c:168) calls for a "'hermeneutical reformation' to correct this growing malpractice".

[11] In this writer's considerable pastoral experience, it is common for people to jump right to application when they have some personal need or desire they wish to anchor to some biblical passage. Thus, the caution of Shealy and Kaiser should be seriously considered by the thoughtful exegete.

[12] Shealy (2002:184-187) outlines some practical guidelines to serve as a hedge against introducing application too early in the hermeneutical practice: (1) be sure of the primary goal, viz. to uncover the original God-intended message; (2) determine what is normative, which is achieved by asking a series of questions (184-185); (3) arrive at doctrine; then, (4) put it into practice.

3.1.6 The assumption of spiritual factors in the hermeneutical process

Unlike other written records, the Bible is uniquely of divine origin, having a distinct authority that transcends the would-be interpreter of the Bible. Given that the grammatical-historical interpreter is conscious that Scripture is God's divine revelation to humanity through human agency superintended by God's Holy Spirit (2 Pt 1:20-21), a striking feature of the hermeneutical process should account for spiritual factors. Because the Bible is the result of the Spirit's (Jn 16:8-13; 2 Pt 1:19-21) attendance, a sinful but believing interpreter requires Holy Spirit illumination to aid in the activity of interpretation (1 Cor 2:6-14). It bears mentioning that the Spirit's illumination is not to be confused with revelation, as the two are distinct functions of the Spirit (Virkler & Ayayo, 2007:29). Illumination enables the interpreter to discover the author's intended meaning, but not to exceed that meaning. Revelation references the special divine disclosure of God to humanity.

As the interpreter submits to the Spirit of God, preparing spiritually for the hermeneutical journey[13], he is acknowledging that education and human faculties are not enough. The interpreter is to display a conscious reliance on the Spirit, who came upon the human author's, as a necessary prerequisite to studying the divinely inspired and authoritative word.[14]

3.1.7 The definition of the grammatical-historical method

It is with the preceding grammatical-historical assumptions in view that a definition for the literal method can now be considered. Once it is understood that the literal method of interpretation relies heavily on an authoritative, divinely inspired text, it then follows that the hermeneutical rules employed will focus on exegeting the original author's intended, singular meaning. Upon uncovering the authorial meaning, the interpreter can then proceed to applying that meaning to present-day concerns, of whatever sort.

As acknowledged earlier in this dissertation (2:1), the grammatical-historical paradigm is a set of hermeneutical principles which seek to unearth the original author's intended meaning in a specific text under examination. This includes the vital elements of "scrutinizing the grammar,

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[13] Those committed to the grammatical-historical method take the time to outline spiritual guidelines for the interpreter to follow as he/she prepares to study the biblical text (McQuilken, 1992:75-78; Ramm, 1993:12-14; Zuck, 1995:22-26), all of which accentuates the spiritual requirements of the interpreter and the hermeneutical acknowledgment that spiritual preparation is required. This is a glaring omission among pro-gay interpreters.

[14] In researching, the writer of this paper noted that not one pro-gay interpreter that was consulted advocated the necessity of spiritual preparation for the hermeneutical procedure. This could imply that they view the interpretation of Scripture as a purely academic or mental exercise.

examining syntactical relationships, defining lexical word meanings, surveying the cultural-historical background of the Ancient Near East, and consideration of the literary genre."[15]

The criticism is sometimes voiced that the literal approach, as summarized above, amounts to a wooden, or stilted literalism interpretation of the Bible. Such criticism is unwarranted and amounts to *argumentum ad hominem,* because the grammatical-historical method acknowledges, and is sensitive to, various literary genres and disparate cultural expressions found throughout the divine record. In truth, the grammatical-historical process allows for identifying and interpreting the numerous literary varieties situated in Scripture. Zuck (1995:147) succinctly captures the essence of the grammatical-historical relationship to figurative language: "Figurative language then is not antithetical to literal interpretation; it is a part of it. Perhaps it is better not to speak of 'figurative versus literal' interpretation, but of 'ordinary-literal' versus 'figurative-literal' interpretation." So, rather than ignoring the numerous and varying conventions of literature, the grammatical-historical paradigm embraces them and seeks the meaning they convey. For this reason, the literal method is best thought to be that process which endeavours to expose the "normal", "ordinary", or "natural" sense of the passage as it is found in its unique setting.[16]

3.2 A grammatical-historical analysis of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

It is with the above grammatical-historical assumptions and definition firmly in mind, that Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 can now be placed under the grammatical-historical microscope and duly probed for interpretive clues concerning the authorial intent and meaning in the related context in which these passages were originally penned. In order to later compare the pro-gay method with the grammatical-historical method, the same aspects of hermeneutics will be considered in the same order as in Chapter 2. These aspects include (1) contextual assumptions, (2) a cultural-historical assessment of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, (3) considering grammatical/lexical categories, (4) analogy of the faith with the inter-textual links explored, and,

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[15] Terry (1999:70) gives a lengthy but useful explanation of the grammatical-historical method: "Its fundamental principle is to gather from the Scriptures themselves the precise meaning which the writers intended to convey. It applies to the sacred books the same principles, the same grammatical process and exercise of common sense and reason, which we apply to other books. The grammatico-historical exegete, furnished with suitable qualifications, intellectual, educational, and moral, will accept the claims of the Bible without prejudice or adverse prepossession, and, with no ambition to prove them true or false, will investigate the language and import of each book with fearless independence. He will master the language of the writer, the particular dialect which he used, and his peculiar style and manner of expression. He will inquire into the circumstances under which he wrote, the manners and customs of his age, and the purpose or object which he had in view. He has a right to assume that no sensible author will be knowingly inconsistent with himself, or seek to bewilder and mislead his readers."

[16] See Thomas's (2002:13-37) call for a return to a pre-1970s definition of hermeneutics that avoids the loaded connotations of what is now commonly termed "pre-understanding".

finally, (5) Culminating in uncovering the meaning the text. This textual meaning will only be applied later in Chapter 6.

3.2.1 Grammatical-historical consideration of the biblical context

Establishing the context for the passages under investigation is an important first step in the grammatical-historical hermeneutical process. In order to understand the two Levitical passages under consideration here (18:22; 20:13), one must first examine the role of Pentateuchal law and its associated influence on Leviticus generally, and then on Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 specifically. With this in mind, the law at large will first be surveyed before narrowing the focus of law and its connection to Leviticus and the passages under scrutiny here.[17]

3.2.1.1 Pentateuchal law at large

The large picture of Leviticus includes an examination of the context of law and its relationship to ancient Israel and their relationship with the lawgiver, who is God. The bulk of the Pentateuch is bordered by the framework of the law God gave Moses at Sinai (Ellis, 2002:245). This was then progressively revealed in the Wilderness as Israel prepared to cross the Jordan and inhabit the land God promised them.

As Israel was developing as a nation and preparing to occupy the Promised Land, God directly informed them about what his moral and ethical standards for them were, through the revelation of his law to them (Averbeck, 1995:113). The law God delivered to Israel comprehensively addressed their unique context culturally, historically, socially, and redemptively (Averbeck, 1995:113). This same divinely-disclosed law extends from Exodus 20 to Deuteronomy 32 and, as Averbeck (1995:115) records, can be categorized into three subgenres: covenant, law, and ritual.[18]

3.2.1.2 Pentateuchal law and covenant

One central factor crucial for understanding both the purpose and function of Old Testament law is to comprehend the vital interplay between God's covenant with Israel and the resulting

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[17] For the purposes of this dissertation, Mosaic authorship is assumed for Leviticus and the Pentateuch. While it has been fashionable in the last century to deny Mosaic authorship, due to the rise of higher critical methodologies, there are still a number of grammatical-historical interpreters who see no credible reasons for jettisoning the long-held belief that Moses is the human author God used to pen the Pentateuch (Archer, 1985:109-123; Grisanti, 2011:217-218; Harrison, 1980:15-25; Kiuchi, 2007:18; Rooker, 2000:38-39; Ross, 2002:33-42;). Grisanti (2011:217-218) summarizes the three primary nuances of Mosaic authorship promoted by evangelicals.

[18] Averbeck (1995:115) observes that ritual legislation extends from Exodus 25 to Leviticus 16. On the other hand, Klein *et al.*, (2004:341) delineate the four major law collections: (1) covenant code — Exodus 20:22-23;33; (2) Deuteronomic code — Deuteronomy 12-26; (3) holiness code — Leviticus 17-26; and (4) priestly code — Exodus 25-31; 34;29; Leviticus 16; portions of Numbers.

law that is framed within the context of that covenant God made with Israel at Sinai (Ex 19:4-8). It is imperative that grammatical-historical interpreters bear in mind that Mosaic law is entrenched within a framework of the Mosaic Covenant. A covenant was an ancient means by which two parties could define, establish, and regulate a bilateral relationship (Averbeck, 1995:116; Eichrodt, 1961:37). So, in this sense, a covenant was quite distinct from a legal contract, which only outlined what was necessary for a business transaction. The significance of covenant law is that it portends a relationship between the two covenanting parties (Dumbrell, 2000:17). What follows by way of stipulations, defines and shapes the expectations God has for his people "in terms of their relationship with him and with one another" (Ellis, 2002:245). Subsequently, the various laws that are disclosed throughout the Pentateuch should be observed within the context of covenantal relationship between God and Israel. God dictates the terms of the relationship as he demarcates the tenets for such a relationship. Instead of a relationship based solely on civil obedience and duty, Israel had an exclusive, inimitable relationship with the God who emancipated them from Egypt.

3.2.1.3 The purpose of covenantal law

The purpose of covenantal law is directly related to its close association within the covenantal framework that brackets it. Because the law is predicated on covenant, which heralds a regulated relationship, Klein *et al.,* (2004:345) conclude that the goal of the law is to teach Israel how to live life in the presence of God.[19] Therefore, the tone of the law is meant to be instructional rather than solely judicial. In other words, there is a relational aspect to the law that must not be overlooked — the law is personal, not impersonal. The law's overall structure is meant to frame the relation God has with Israel, as well as the relationship they have with God and each other. In short, this is a bilateral relationship that is mediated by divine revelation (Walton, 1994:24-46).

While the law positively promotes the relationship between God and Israel, the Old Testament law never conceives of law as a means of salvation nor the incentive for establishing a relationship (Dumbrell, 2000:9; Ellis, 2002:246). Rather, the law and covenant should be applied as a result of the grace God has already lavished on Israel[20] (Ellis, 2002:246) during the Exodus (Ex 19:4-6; 20:2-3). On the contrary, law should be seen in more of a sanctification context that promotes the "peace" and "well-being" of Israel (Dumbrell, 1997:91; Ellis, 2002:246).

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[19] The Ten Commandments, according to Klein *et al.,* (2004:345), are "foundational ethical principles" meant to "maintain the relationship" between God and Israel.

[20] This is not to imply that all of Israel believed.

Moreover, the purpose of Old Testament law in a covenant context was not intended to constitute an exhaustive legal code for Israel (Brunside, 2006:387-420; Ellis, 2002:251; Klein *et al.*, 2004:345; Wenham, 2003:68-73). This is well explained by Klein *et al.,* (2004:345): "Instead of a code in a modern sense, Old Testament laws present a select sample of illustrative cases or topics whose legal principles were to guide Israelite individuals, the larger community, and the lawmakers in making decisions and in living out Israel's worldview." The law of Israel was never meant to cover every conceivable situation and circumstance that would arise. Instead, the law, because it was relationally orientated, established "precedents" (Burnside, 2006:395-396; cf. Ellis, 2002:251). These precedents allowed individuals and the nation to deduce principles that could be applied to any situation their given culture and customs might present (Burnside, 2006:408). What is true on the macro-scale of the law is correspondingly true of the micro-scale as well. Kaiser (1994:1124) remarks that the sexual prohibitions found in Leviticus 18 "are in no way meant to be an exhaustive list of all possible combinations of unions." As will be seen later, this has far-reaching implications for the missing daughter of Leviticus 18:6 as well as the silence in 18:22 related to lesbianism.[21]

As in the New Testament (Mt 22:37), the sum of the law is wrapped and woven into the biblical concept of love, seen in both vertical and horizontal dimensions of loving God and loving one's neighbour as oneself (Dt 6:5; Lv 19:18). So the law, in relationship with covenant, is meant to foster an intimate relationship between Israel and her God who redeemed her from Egypt, and it then dictates the contours of human (horizontal) relationships.

3.2.1.4 Law and its taxonomy

In the enterprise of understanding Old Testament law and its various subgenres, two predominant types of law emerge in the Pentateuch, defining the two primary ways Old Testament law was articulated to Israel (Harris, 1990:514-516; Marshall, 2003:171-182): The first is what Averbeck (1995:120) calls "Divine decree" or, more commonly, apodictic law; the second brand of law frequently used in the Pentateuch is casuistic law, or case law.

Apodictic law, while common in Israel, was a rarity in the surrounding Ancient Near Eastern culture and societies (Ellis, 2002:250; Klein *et al.,* 2004:343; Von Soden, 1994:131). One of the primary characteristics of apodictic law is its directness and absolute nature, which implies an

[21] Burnside (2006:387-420) advances this idea more exhaustively than most in his discussion about the 7th Command serving as a "narrative typification of sexual misconduct", meaning that one prohibition represents every conceivable sexual distortion beyond the one-man one-woman relationship presented in the creational design of Genesis 1 and 2. This would make homosexuality of any kind a form i.e., subgenre of adultery (Burnside, 2006:402-403). Burnside (2006:398) explains that one of the primary duties of the ancient Hebrew priest was "to teach binary oppositions (Lv 10:10)". Thus, the law was never meant to be an exhaustive legal code, but rather representational in nature, with each act juxtaposed with the stated norm from the law (Burnside, 2006:401, 408).

emphatic forcefulness. A modern way to describe this particular subgenre of law would be to refer to it as law that has a tone that is "black and white". The Ten Commandments are a great example of apodictic law with the direct "Thou shalt"/"Thou shalt not". The following elements detail the unique features of apodictic law[22]:

- Apodictic laws have an unconditional directness (Klein *et al.*, 2004:342), clearly denoting right and wrong (Alt, 1967:161).
- Apodictic laws use the second person personal address "You shall", or contrastingly "You shall not".
- Apodictic laws primarily address moral and religious matters confronting Israel.
- Apodictic laws are broader in their scope, e.g. "Thou shalt not kill" has to be properly explained and then applied because of the broad principle it represents (Alt, 1967:146).
- Apodictic laws addressed that which was directly related to "sacral life", while case laws addressed those matters related to the secular or civil realm (Alt, 1967:146; Harris, 1990:515). This indicates both a vertical and horizontal dimension embedded in the law.

The other subgenre of law that is frequently observed in the Pentateuch is casuistic law. This is characterized by the following qualities[23]:

- Case law is immediately recognizable by the "if"/"then" formula. Case law commonly begins with the protasis clause ("if" or "when"), and is then followed by the apodosis clause which states the legal response or penalty attached to violating the law in question (Ellis, 2002:249).
- Case law uses a more impersonal form of address, being directed at the third person situation.
- Case law is narrower in scope, highlighting more specific cases or situations, before announcing the legal consequences for violation of the law. In this, case law is more precise.

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[22] Klein *et al.*, (2004:343-344) proceed to discuss two subgenres of apodictic law. The first is what they refer to as *participle law*, which identifies capital crimes by using a Hebrew participle like "whoever strikes", after which the main verb prescribes the penalty, e.g. "shall be put to death — Exodus 21:12 is an example of participle law. The second apodictic subgenre is termed the law of retaliation, more commonly known as *lex talionis*. This outlines a principle of proportionality in premeditated crimes involving bodily harm — examples include Exodus 21:23-25; cf. Genesis 9:6; Leviticus 24:18-22.

[23] As with apodictic law, casuistic law has a discernible subgenre which Averbeck (1995:121) describes two ways: *remedial laws* that outline the response of someone who has had their rights violated by another — "if" one was violated, "then" the proper compensation is prescribed, or retaliation, depending on the nature of the violation — Exodus 21:20 illustrates this. Secondly, Averbeck considers *primary law*, which he says "governed rights and duties … 'if' describes the legal relationship, 'then' prescribes conditions of the relationship" — Exodus 21:2 is an example of *primary law*.

- Case laws, according to Klein *et al.,* (2004:344), "are grammatically more complex and wordy" and, therefore, tend to be "organized into topical groups" like the family laws of Leviticus 20:9-21.
- Case law primarily treats civil and criminal cases (Alt, 1967:146; Harris, 1990:515; Marshall, 2003:174).
- Case laws deal with observable problems, not ideals, so they serve as a "minimum standard of behaviour" which is meant "to curb the worst excesses" (Wenham, 1997:71-72, 77).

In light of the above descriptions of both apodictic and casuistic law[24], it is relevant that the two passages under scrutiny in this paper are examples of both types of law:

Apodictic: Leviticus 18:22 "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination."
Casuistic: Leviticus 20:13 "If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

The import of this observation will be discussed in greater detail later. For now, it is worth pointing out both forms of law are present in both Levitical passages (Lv 18:22; 20:13). Apodictic and casuistic law served as the basis for Israel's legal principles from which she could render judgment on "behaviours not specifically addressed by any law" (Burnside, 2006:387-420; Ellis, 2002:253-254). Although Old Testament law bore similarities to the law codes of Ancient Near Eastern contemporaries, there were even more significant differences (Eichrodt, 1961:77-82; Oswalt, 2009:69-81),[25] Israel had extensive laws discouraging both the practice of idolatry (Ellis, 2002:251) and sympathetic magic (Oswalt, 2009:75-76), while entertaining far

[24] There are a number of scholars who are not convinced that the differences between apodictic and casuistic law are as significant as some earlier scholars believed. In this vein, Selman (2003:504) cautions, "What seems clear from even this brief analysis is the flexibility of both unconditional [apodictic] and casuistic forms. Both can express general principles as well as laws that function within a legal system. Furthermore, all the pentateuchal law collections, with the exception of the Ten Commandments, contain a mixture of unconditional expressions and case laws. It must therefore be concluded that a simple distinction between apodictic and casuistic law is an insufficient basis for drawing conclusions about different types of law." Selman (2003:504) does proceed to qualify his statement, remarking that "the form of a law does, however, convey something about the context in which it was used …"

[25] The distinctions between Israel's law and the Ancient Near Eastern codes is nowhere more pronounced than in the area of sexuality, because, as Oswalt (2009:74-75) explains, "sex is desacralized" in the Mosaic law giving the ancient Jews a unique and unrivalled sexual ethic among the ancients. Hess (2008:740) notes that Leviticus provides the most conservative sexual ethic in the ANE.

more sexual stipulations than was common in other Ancient Near Eastern societies.[26] Regardless of the type of law given to Israel, the nature of that law was rooted in a covenant relationship with Israel's God and reflected something much deeper than mere duty and external conformity — the catalyst for Israel's obedience was to be found in covenant and the corresponding relationship of gratitude it was meant to nurture.

3.2.1.5 Levitical links to the law

An examination of the literary and legal structure of Leviticus is a vital aspect in the treatment of homosexuality in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (Wold, 1998:92). In narrowing the broad scope of Old Testament law in its association with the book of Leviticus, the law's influence on the book as whole will be considered first before addressing some of the pertinent the legal contours of Leviticus 18-20.

3.2.1.5.1 Leviticus' inter-textual links to the law

Leviticus comprises a critical link to the progressive development of Old Testament law, which began in Exodus 20 and extends, as Averbeck (1995:115) contends, to Deuteronomy 32. Couched in this context, Leviticus is a crucial part in the process of divine-law delineation. Given that the crux of the book is primarily concerned with the presence of God and his character in relation to Israel (Gane, 2004:32), Leviticus addresses a secondary, and closely related, theme of human depravity and its impact on the divine-human relationship. It is here that the various forms of law are revealed in the continuing context of covenant. Levitical law fulfils a twofold purpose of defining more of the personal character and nature of Israel's God, while simultaneously detailing the plight of humanity's sinful predicament and the threat it poses to the covenant relationship (Walton, 2001:293-304).

It is important to see Exodus as a necessary precursor to Leviticus (Grisanti, 2011:223; Merrill, 1991:57; Ross, 2002:20), forming what Kiuchi (2007:27-28) has termed an "ideological relationship" between the two books. The predication for this link is most evident in Exodus 19:5-6, where the redeemed Israel "becomes a unique possession" of God (Ross, 2002:18-19). All of which precludes extricating Leviticus from its Pentateuchal context. Not only does Exodus 19:5-6 extend forward to Leviticus, but it simultaneously reaches back to bridge an inter-textual link to the Abrahamic Covenant, while advancing to the legislation of Sinai to further regulate the Hebrews in a binding relationship with their Suzerain (Rooker, 2000:41). In essence, the Mosaic Covenant, extending from Exodus 19:5-6, is "establishing a pattern of sanctification … a

[26] See Speiser's (1967:538-565) explanation of the Ancient Near Eastern law forms and the differences that distinguished ancient Jewish law.

priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Peterson, 2004:4; cf. VanGemeren, 1988:1316), to which Leviticus as a whole testifies.[27]

The law that unfolds in Leviticus focuses on ritual in ceremony in Chapters 1-17[28], while laws regulating individual and national conduct are the focus of Chapters 18-27 (Kiuchi, 2007:45). The ritual legislation detailed in Leviticus 1-17 is a progression of the ritual law already outlined in Exodus 25-40 (Selman, 2003:502). Averbeck (1995:122) summarizes the relationship from Exodus 25 through Leviticus 9 as one in which the intertextual pericope "explains and initiates the tabernacle and priestly ritual system."[29] Then, accordingly, Leviticus 10-16[30] is an explanation of the "internal and ritualistic structure" of things from a priestly point of view. All of which then culminates in Leviticus 17-25 laws directing both the nation and individual in comprehensively holy conduct with "social [communal], religious, and naturalistic implications" for Israel.

So there is an obvious and discernible link between Leviticus and the Sinaitic Covenant. This is a link which sees Leviticus expanding and further revealing the nature of Israel's relationship with the God who redeemed her from the trenches of slavery in Egypt, and then emancipated her for a covenant relationship with himself.

3.2.1.5.2 The legal contours of Leviticus 18-20

The more immediate context of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is situated snugly in the environment of three chapters that form a distinct unit within the book of Leviticus. Like the rest of the book, Chapters 18-20 are circumscribed by the theme of covenantal law that underwrites Israel's conduct, or manner of life in a holy walk before a holy God. In keeping with the legal format already discussed, Gagnon (2001:121) believes that most of Leviticus 18-20 should be thought of as extended exposition on the Ten Commandments with the practical profile of holiness being further developed in the larger context of Leviticus 17-27.

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[27] VanGemeren (1988:1316) explains that the purpose of Old Testament law was used of God as a "means of sanctification. He consecrated Israel by an act of grace, and required Israel to remain holy."

[28] Some commentators make the break at Chapter 16, while others suggest Chapter 17 as the break. For the purposes of this thesis, it makes no exegetical difference one way or the other. Based on the crescendo of Chapter 16, it may be best to make the break there, viewing Chapter 17 as an intra-textual bridge that leads from doctrine to duty in a more transitional way.

[29] Although Leviticus is a continuation of the tabernacle legislation found in Exodus 25-40, it should be noted that the legislation is far more varied and "wide-ranging than tabernacle laws" (Selman, 2003:502).

[30] Averbeck (1995:122) sees Leviticus 10-16 as the literary and theological centre of the book, with the culmination in Chapter 16 on The Day of Atonement.

It is noteworthy that Leviticus 18 is written apodictically while the parallel passages in Chapter 20 are distinctly casuistic in style, defining the severity of the attached penalty. Both Chapters 18 and 20 address the twin themes of sexual conduct (18:6-20, 22-23; 20:9-20) and conduct in worship (18:21; 20:1-9), with Chapter 19 apodictically addressing a wide range of religious, civil, and moral issues that are directly related to the Decalogue. This testifies to the holistic approach of Mosaic law and its comprehensive nature[31] which applies to every aspect of life (Nyarenchi, 2004:108).

When analysing Leviticus 18:1-30, Wold (1998:99) sees the application of holiness as the "ground for sexual conduct", while Ukleja (1983:262; cf. also Burnside, 2006:402-403) contends that Leviticus 18, with special application to 18:22 and 20:13, is a further expansion of the 7th Commandment to not commit adultery.[32] In the opening introduction of 18:1-2, Wenham (1979:250) comments that the formal address, "I am the LORD your God", is almost identical to the opening introduction of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:2 and Deuteronomy 5:6 — "I am the LORD your God". This formula is employed fifty times in Leviticus 18-20, in both its abridged and unabridged forms. Further evidence of the pronounced interrelationship of Leviticus 18-20 with the whole Sinaitic Covenant is echoed by Bailey (2005:218), who states each apodictic proscription in Leviticus 18:6-18 is "imitating the 10 Commands".

There are some grammatical-historical scholars who assert that Leviticus 18:1-30 takes the Ancient Near Eastern form of a suzerain-vassal treaty of the ancient Hittites (Harrison, 1980:184-185; Ross, 2002:340; Wold, 1998:9, 96-97), which is a covenant yoking a political superior with a political subordinate. The structure of suzerain treaties is outlined as follows (Harrison, 1980:184-185; Marshall, 2003:173-174; Wold, 1998:96-98):

- Preamble: an abbreviated identification of the author or victorious king.
- Historical prologue: a recitation of what the king has done on behalf of the vassal, explaining why the vassal is obligated to actively obey the stipulations the king is legislating.
- Stipulations: the laws detailing the conduct of the vassal before the king.
- Provision for deposit: normally a sacred place like a shrine, or temple where the covenant and accompanying stipulations are to be periodically read.

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[31] It is comprehensive in the sense that it (law) covered all areas of life, not comprehensive in the exhaustive sense of the word.

[32] DeVaux (1997:37) adds that the 7th Commandment was strategically situated between the prohibition against murder and the prohibition against stealing, as these are acts that violate one's neighbour. This was something that was thought to be commonly abhorred in the Ancient Near East. Uniquely, the narratives of Genesis 20:1-13 and 26:7-11 portray adultery as a sin against God as well.

- Witnesses: are summoned, usually gods, to verify the implementation of the treaty.
- Blessings and curses: to signify the good and bad things that result from compliance or lack of compliance on the part of the vassal — Deuteronomy 28-29 is a good example of this.
- Oath or ratification ceremony: sometimes performed, which could include the slaughter of an animal serving as an illustration of what would happen if the vassal violated the terms of the treaty (cf. Gn 15:17).

Wold (1998:96-97) further elaborates: "It is not necessary that all features correspond exactly between Hittite treaties and Leviticus 18, for in the Ancient Near East literature similar treaties differed in several points … The order of the features may also vary."[33] Harrison (1980:184) and Ross (2002:340) exposit the suzerain format of Leviticus 18 in the following way:

- Preamble: "I am the LORD your God" used three times in the beginning (18:2, 4, 5) and once at the end (18:30) to create an inclusio (bracketing effect) that amplified in the main address with "I am the LORD" (18:6, 21).
- Historical prologue: found in 18:3 — "the land of Egypt where you lived".
- Stipulations: 18:4 chronicles the basic stipulation: "'You are to perform my judgments and keep my statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God.'" 18:6-23 then details the specific stipulations proscribing Israel's sexual behaviour.
- Witnesses: It is Yahweh in 18:30 who is sole originator of this treaty as He attaches his solitary signature to the covenant, "I am the LORD your God."
- Blessing and cursing: 18:5 contains the blessing, while 18:24-29 warns of the curse for violating the stipulations most emphatically. This entails Israel being "vomited out" of the land and "cut off".

As previously stated, suzerain treaties allowed some structural variation which explains the lack of provision for deposit for placement in the shrine or temple. Wold (1998:98) relates this treaty omission to Israel's nomadic existence with a portable tabernacle in the desert and lack of a permanent temple.[34] What seems obvious is that the chapter as a whole resembles the arrangement common to suzerain treaties further reflecting the legal tone of the context.

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[33]See Wold (1998:96-98) for more details and comparison of Leviticus 18 with the Ancient Near Eastern schema of a suzerain treaty.

[34] Wold (1998:98) further explains: "Since the writer of Leviticus contemplates a nomadic people confined to the wilderness for forty years in the pre-conquest era, he did not stipulate that this treaty be placed in the temple. It is assumed that sacred documents would be stored in the temple when Israel became settled and the temple became the focal point of worship."

From the Pentateuchal context — remote, near, and immediate — it is obvious that the Levitical unit in Chapters 18-20 is circumscribed and well-defined by a number of features of Old Testament law. This is all expressed in the covenant milieu of Israel's relationship to Yahweh.

3.2.1.6 Levitical context of holiness

An often recurring theme that pervades the Levitical context is that of "holy" or "holiness" (קָדוֹשׁ), and its various forms are used 152 times throughout the twenty-seven chapters of Leviticus (Rooker, 2000:46; Wenham, 1979:18). The injunction of Leviticus 19:2, "'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy",[35] is the primary call to the nation of Israel to imitate the holy God who in his very essence and nature is transcendentally holy. This includes more than merely being "set apart", but includes the notion of purity and cleanness (Martans, 2002:201). This pervasive theme finds its intertextual impetus in Exodus 19:6, "you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation". The Levitical legislation further defines what it means for Israel to be a "holy nation" as God continues to prepare them to be a distinct witness to the other nations (Kaiser, 1994:988).

The distinct notion of holiness in Leviticus includes what Kaiser (1994:988) calls "double separation" that renders something or someone both distinct and separate. As Kaiser (1994:997) describes it, this twin idea implies both an "ontological" and "moral gap" which separates humanity from God, so that God graciously spans the gap to enable what would otherwise be impossible. In detailing this dual idea of holiness, Rooker (2000:47) explains that holiness is first a "transcendent attribute of God" which serves to underscore the "separateness" or "otherness" of God. As the people exercise their separateness through the Levitical legislation, they will then demonstrate the "otherness" of their God in contrast to the gods and goddesses of the surrounding nations. Holiness is to comprehensively pervade every area of life from how they worship, what they eat, what they wear, how they farm, how to conduct marriage and family life, to how to treat one's neighbour. Holiness is to be demonstrated in the ceremonial, civil, and moral areas of life by all the people of Israel.[36] This description contains two critical and inseparable aspects of Israel's holiness: separateness from sin, which is related to moral purity; and separation from various defiling acts or agents, which is related to the concept of ritual holiness (Harris, 1990:524).

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[35] The same command is issued in 11:44; 20:7, 26; and 21:8, inviting Israel to conform to the intrinsically holy nature of Yahweh, who is "the ground and starting point" (Kaiser, 1991:112) for holiness.

[36] God's holiness is to be the touchstone for Israel's holiness and extended to every area of life, as Leviticus 19 details (Bailey, 2005:257).

Because the Lord is constitutionally holy, his redeemed are then enjoined to obey the laws he gave them, responding out of loving gratitude rather than formal duty. The twofold separation of holiness has a twofold response on the part of the respondents who seek to positively be different (Lv 18:2-4). Because of the holy ontology of their God, they then determine to refuse the unholy moral and worship practices of surrounding nations (Peterson, 2004:6) that would cause them to "profane" Yahweh (Kaiser, 1994:1136). And so it follows that to "be holy" is to imitate God by complying with his revealed will through the legislation given[37], while rejecting those aspects of Canaanite culture[38] which are contrary to Yahweh's standards of holiness (Bailey, 2005:226-227). So the composite of Levitical holiness has both a negative and positive polarity of which Israel was to be aware (Hamilton, 2005:286). It is both a disposition and a duty.

As holiness is applied to the different portions of Leviticus, it can be subdivided in the following way: (1) ceremonial holiness 1-17 and (2) conduct holiness 18-27 (Kiuchi, 2007:45). Another way of describing it is: (1) holiness in worship 1-17 and (2) holiness in walk 18-27. The emphasis in Chapters 1-17 is related more to the ritual and ceremony in Israel's worship, while Chapters 18-27, the holiness code, concentrate more on the moral and ethical demands of holiness.[39]

In the unit under discussion (Lv 18-20), each chapter, although interrelated, reveals a different focus of holiness: holiness in sexual behaviour (Lv 18), holiness in social ethics (Lv 19), and holiness in worship and family relations (Lv 20). In reference to Leviticus 18, Wold (1998:99) argues, based on Martin Buss, that holiness is the "ground of sexual conduct" i.e., established sexual boundaries. Additionally, Wold explains that the context of Chapters 17-24 "emulates the trans-historical nature of God" as opposed to imitating God's limited historical activity (1998:94). Based on the thesis of sexual holiness found in Leviticus 18, Kaiser (1994:1128) asserts that "sexual holiness may be the first line of practical defence for all who are on the road to living a holy life devoted to God." For this reason, Hartley (1992:280) entitles Chapter 18 of Leviticus "Laws governing the extended family".

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[37] If the laws given by God are contravened by the recipients, it is tantamount to an attack on God who commands his people to be holy (Kaiser, 1994:1132).

[38] Bailey (2005:218) rightly reminds readers that "the text does not forbid all avoidance of customs of Egyptians and Canaanites" like food, dress, language, houses, etc. … "What is forbidden are those actions which are expressly against the nature and character of Israel's God Yahweh".

[39] In his breakdown of the book, Walton (2001:299-303) uses the following concepts: 1-17 regulates the equilibrium of sacred space; 18-22 deals with sacred space when it is jeopardized by the status of individuals; while the remainder of the book (23-27) addresses sacred time.

Holiness is a theme that is woven like a thread throughout the garment of Leviticus, stitching together the disparate and diverse facets of the book under the common denominator of holiness. A primary emphasis of God's covenant with Israel is that they are to be holy as He Himself is holy. It is through this God-established covenant that God seeks "to restore holiness on earth" (Ross, 2002:20) through his chosen people.

3.2.1.7 The immediate context of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

Before considering the actual texts of Scripture which are the fulcrum of this study, it is needful to summarize the immediate context of both Leviticus 18 and 20 in order to place the specific characteristics of 18:22 and 20:13 within a properly contoured environment. This has already been done to some extent in 3.2.1.5 and 3.2.1.6. Here, the contextual observations of Leviticus will be discussed in greater detail. Thereafter, Chapter 20 will be covered in more detail.

3.2.1.7.1 The unique context of Leviticus 18:22

Leviticus 18 is more extensive than any other portion of Scripture in detailing the boundaries of sexuality within the familial context and beyond. What is unique about Chapter 18 is, as previously discussed in 3.2.1.6, that it follows the taxonomy of a Hittite suzerain-vassal treaty. Leviticus 18:1-5 begins as a formal exhortation for Israel to avoid the customs of the pagans, both the Egyptians[40], from whom they had just been liberated, and the Canaanites, who represent those to whom they will be exposed when they take occupation of the land promised. The overall context of Chapter 18 indicates that pagan sexual customs and culture as they pertain to the family are what is in view. In contrast with those nations whom Israel would come into contact with, their laws concerning marriage and sexuality were meant to distinguish them while simultaneously protecting the family unit (Bailey, 2005:221; Rooker, 2000:240) as they settled in the new land. The consequences for failure — to observe what God outlines for the individual as well as the nation here — are catalogued in 18:24-30. It is notable that 18:3-5 and 18:24-30 address the 2nd person plural while 18:6-23 focus on the 2nd person singular (Kiuchi, 2007:329).[41] The implication is that both communal and individual responsibilities, with accountability, are at stake, because what is done in private affects the community at large.

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[40] Apparently, incest was not uncommon among ancient Pharaohs, who would arrange marriages between brother and sister and father and daughter (Levine, 1989:118) for the purpose of consolidating power — such were thought to be "acts of piety" (Walton, 2009:309-310).

[41] Davidson (2007:149) remarks that the use of the Hebrew 2nd person masculine singular pronoun in 18:6-23 is the Hebrew way of expressing gender-inclusive language as in the Decalogue, which uses a similar address. In the same way, modern use of the English "man" is clearly intended to address both men and women.

In between the exhortation (18:1-5) and the collective consequences (18:24-30), the stipulations are specified, after a more general stipulation is given (18:6). The specifics of what constitutes incest are explained in 18:7-18. Two principles from 18:6 (Levine, 1989:117) serve to frame the remainder of the incest code in Chapter 18 and beyond. According to Levine, none of the men are to "approach" any of their "blood relations" (שְׁאֵר בָּשָׂר). This focuses on their consanguinal relatives (blood relatives or close relatives) of both the first and second degree (Kiuchi, 2007:331). Furthermore, they are not to "uncover the nakedness" (גלה עֶרְוָה) of those "blood relations". The idea of "uncovering the nakedness of" (גָּלָה עֶרְוָה) is a common Old Testament euphemism used for sexual relations[42] and is employed fifteen times in 18:6-17 (Kaiser, 1994:1124; Rooker, 2000:242). This passage underscores the great concern for maintaining the stability of the nuclear family, which both Kaiser and Levine (1994:1124; 1989:117) say is defined by these six relationships: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister. This prohibition certainly has intertextual ties (Kiuchi, 2007:329-335; Rooker, 2000:242) with Genesis 3, where nakedness is associated with shame, and Genesis 2:24, where the "one flesh" doctrine is spelled out.

The general prohibition of 18:6 is thought by many grammatical-historical interpreters to forbid other close family relationships not specifically mentioned in the extended text, like the omission of the father/daughter combination, which is conspicuous by its absence(Bailey, 2005:220; Gane, 2004:317; Kiuchi, 2007:331). Both Kaiser (1994:1125) and Levine (1989:120) claim that the missing daughter of Leviticus 18:6-23 is implied or inferred *a fortiori*, based on the proscription of 18:10 which bars the grandfather/granddaughter relationship.[43] In like manner, no warning is needed against the uncle/niece union, because of the warning in 18:14 that excludes the aunt/nephew union. So verse 6 not only summarizes the rules that follow (18:7-17), but, as Kiuchi (2007:331) believes, it forms a basic principle that includes self-evident omissions like the two already mentioned. It is here that the representational nature of Mosaic law, as previously mentioned, can be seen in what Burnside (2006:395-396) has called "narrative typification".

As 18:7-18 unfolds, addressing the heads of households, it becomes obvious that the ancient Hebrew definition for incest was significantly more expanded than the modern understanding[44],

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[42] Rather than using a specific word for sexual behaviour, the Old Testament uses a variety of euphemisms to uniquely describe not only the sex act but also male and female genitalia (Naude, 1997:1198-1200; Sprinkle, 2003:741-742). While the Old Testament directly confronts the issue of sexuality, it does so in a more dignified way by making use of these various euphemisms.

[43] See Ziskind (1996:125-130).

[44] Bailey (2005:215) categorizes the illicit incest prohibitions accordingly: 18:6-11 closest relatives, 18:12-14 parents' relatives, 18:15-16 relatives by marriage (affines), 18:17-18 wife's relatives.

since it broadly included not only consanguinal relationships of the first and second degree, but also affinal relationships that produced a familial kinship relationship resulting from marriage. The variety of injunctions detailed in verses 7-18 would have addressed the ancient household concept where extended families dwelt in close proximity to one another. These bans on illicit sexual relations also highlight the nature of kinship relations that resulted from marriage, whereby a son's wife automatically became a daughter to the patrilineal side of the family. The disastrous results of violating this legislation are illustrated throughout the Old Testament. Leviticus 18:9, for example, forbids marriage to one's half-sister (cf. 20:17; Dt 27:22), but Abram claimed Sarai as his wife and sister (Gn 20:12), with almost disastrous consequences; Leviticus 18:18[45] proscribes marriage (20:19-20) to the sister of one's wife while one's wife is still alive, but Jacob was married to both Rachel and Leah, who were sisters (Gn 29:21-30). The remainder of the Genesis narrative chronicles the unhappy outcome of such an alliance.[46] Rather than being anachronistic retrojections, these examples from the Genesis narrative are an extension of creation ontology, upon which both marriage and sexuality are predicated (Greidanus, 1985:46-48; Mauser, 1996:3-5; Seitz, 2000:191; Wright, 2004:283[47]).[48]

The legislation subsequent to the ban on illicit incest (18:6-18) forms a variegated ruling on various other sexual prohibitions. These were more than likely sexual practices characterized by the Canaanites. Therefore, holiness was required in the realm of sleeping with a menstruant (18:19), adultery (18:20) — which was an ever-present risk, sacrifice of children to Molech[49] (18:21), homosexuality (18:22), and bestiality (18:23), all of which were legislated against, for various reasons that are not always obvious at first.

The rationale for these numerously varied proscriptions is not explicitly stated, but is obvious to the serious interpreter. Below, some plausible suggestions are offered:[50]

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[45] Gane (2004:319) cites the reason for prohibiting such a marriage relationship, viz. because it pits the two sisters "as a rival" צָרַר , which is a Qal infinitive, and introduces a new social dynamic that is elevated above the objective of the kinship relation between the two sisters. Hence, a bitter rivalry could develop.

[46] The proscription of marrying cousins is not included in the Pentateuchal legislation, see Levine (1989:253-254).

[47] Wright (2004:283) is careful to warn against dismissing these Genesis narratives related to sexuality as anachronistic retrojections read back into the text by some Deuteronomistic editors, as many Old Testament scholars suppose. Rather, Wright underscores the importance of considering these narratives in light of their creational context.

[48] See Robertson (2002) for an extensive treatment of sexual violations in the narrative accounts of Genesis.

[49] See Milgrom's (2000:1554-1564) discussion of Molech, and Von Soden's (1994:193) treatment of child sacrifice in the Ancient Near East.

[50] See Himbaza *et al.,* 2012:45-71 for a number of helpful suggestions.

- Because Israel belongs to the LORD (18:1, 4, 5, etc.) and they are his possession and a part of his household, their sexual desires are to be subordinated to his holy will (Bailey, 2005:203; Rooker, 2000:242).
- All of the laws in 18:6-23 and 20:2-21, in Gagnon's (2001:137) estimation, legislate against sexual acts and lifestyles that disrupt the created order of Genesis 1 and 2 — an order established by the God of Israel in the beginning.
- Based on the concept of the Ancient Near Eastern household, where extended family[51] lived in the same household and the patriarch was the primary authority in pre-monarchical Israel, unchecked sexual desires would cause tremendous strife and discord. So sexual impulses and the illegitimate use of authority all had to be curbed for the sake of the family and the stability of Israelite society (Bailey, 2005:220).
- The positive results instituted general order in the family unit and served to protect the women in the household from becoming random objects of sexual desire. Moreover these laws helped avoid the "rivalry" (18:18) that competing affections produce, like that between Sarah and Hagar (Gn 21) or that of Elkanah's wives (1 Sm 1).
- More generally, these regulations are intended to direct male sexual impulses into a biblical pattern of behaviour that will be conducive to promoting the healthy functioning of a people who are set apart to serve God's holy purposes (Gagnon, 2001:137).
- Based on the nature of these laws and the serious treatment they receive, various grammatical-historical interpreters uphold the universal perpetuity, albeit with some alterations and caveats, of the moral standards derived from this legislation (Davidson, 2007:157; DeYoung, 2000:50).

True to the character of apodictic commands, Leviticus 18:6-23 does not attach any penalty to these infractions of the stipulated legislation. Although 18:24-30 does warn Israel as a nation that, when individuals violate these laws, the nation as a whole will be held accountable and could face land forfeiture and experience being "cut off" (*kareth* penalty) from the LORD and the land He gave them (18:28-29), for disobedience and failure to enforce the said legislation. This collective judgement is described in very graphic and convincing terms. The use of the verb "vomit" personifies (prosopopeia) the vividness of the land angrily spewing the inhabitants from its borders (Currid, 2004:245). It is a judgment that includes both the sojourner and the alien (18:26-28). The whole argument of the chapter is then fortified in the final exhortation (18:29-30) for the Jews to keep God's covenantal law while simultaneously avoiding pagan practices. The seriousness of the warning is fortified by God's sovereign authority with the use of the divine

[51] For further explanation of the family structure in Old Testament Israel, consult Levine's (1989:253-254) Excursus 5, *Family structures in biblical Israel*.

formula “I am Yahweh”. This serves as an inclusio to bracket the beginning in 18:2 (Currid, 2004:246).

While not an exhaustive commentary of the surrounding context of Leviticus 18:22, this contextual overview, nevertheless, provides a necessary portal through which to examine 18:22, recognizing that no isolated passage is unattached to its surrounding context.

3.2.1.7.2 The unique context of Leviticus 20:13

The repetition of Leviticus 20 may seem redundant and superfluous, but its casuistic format serves to buttress the argument against the sexual licence of contemporary pagan nations like Egypt and Canaan. While Chapter 20 develops the same basic themes as Chapters 18 and 19, Chapter 20 emphasizes the penalty of transgression of the apodictic mandates from Leviticus 18 and 19. Chapters 18 and 20 are not independent compositions, as some claim (Kiuchi, 2007:370). Rather, Chapter 18 views the sexual proscriptions from the point of kinship, while Chapter 20 accentuates the juridical penalties associated with violation. So, Chapter 20 records the severe consequences of contravening God’s holy will related to worship and sexuality.

The first eight verses of Chapter 20 chronicle the penalties for improper worship of Molech, a form of worship that is condemned in the strongest terms possible. Then, after another exhortation to holiness and obedience (20:7-8), 20:9-21 documents the penalties for transgressions related to family and sexuality, detailing the various degrees of penalty, from capital offenses (20:3-5, 9-16, 27) to being “cut off” (20:3-5, 6, 17-18) and remaining childless (20:20-21). The concluding exhortation is to holiness again (20:22-26), which serves as a formal closing (DeYoung, 2000:54).

While Leviticus 18 differs from Chapter 20 in that it is apodictic, while 20 is casuistic, what binds the two chapters together is the “assumed connection” (Levine, 1989:135) between pagan worship and sexual degeneracy, both of which were cause for Israel’s eventual exile. Just as Mosaic law was meant to convey a holistic intent, so there is a comprehensive interrelationship between idolatry and sexual distortion, as what happens sacrally spills over into the secular/civil realm. So, contrary to what Levine (1989:135) maintains, Leviticus 18 and 20 are woven together by a common theme. Yet, like witnesses at a crime scene, these two chapters are just written from different perspectives — 18 from the context of kinship and 20 from the standpoint of penalty. At the same time, both meet at the intersection of God’s holiness.

3.2.2 A grammatical-historical evaluation of the prevailing Ancient Near Eastern culture and customs

An important aspect of understanding any text of Scripture is found in discovering the *Sitz im Leben* (life situation) of the surrounding cultures and their understanding of any issue a biblical text may be addressing. Most of the ancient cultures of the late second millennium BCE — except Israel (Eichrodt, 1961:80-82) — had much in common related to marriage customs maintaining a fairly standard view of heterosexuality, premarital relations, polygamy, adultery, and divorce (Wenham, 1991:359; Wold, 1998:20). However, what significantly distinguished ancient Israel from her neighbours was a far more developed set of laws related to incest and homosexuality (Oswalt, 2009:75; Wenham, 1991:360). Much of the ambiguity that accompanies Ancient Near Eastern laws related to some of the sexual regulations found in Old Testament law finds a more direct address in Scripture. Although Israel shared some similarities with the surrounding cultures of the day in terms of marriage customs and sexuality, the differences are many and stark — probably in large measure because of the distinct worldview to which Israel held.

Still, it is instructive to consider the Ancient Near Eastern's perspective on sexuality — both secular and sacred — with reference to homosexuality during the latter part of the Bronze Age and leading into the Iron Age. To this end, the ancient Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Hittites, and Canaanites need to be investigated for clues related to the sexual *Sitz im Leben* of that period.

3.2.2.1 The Ancient Near Eastern context of Mesopotamia

Of all the Ancient Near Eastern cultures in the Old Testament time frame, the most influential would have been the Mesopotamians, since their legal code set the tone for much of the Ancient Near East in the sphere of marriage and sexuality (Wold, 1998:43-44). The general outlook of the Mesopotamians is explained by Stol (2006:493; cf. Leick, 2003:153, 164), who describes the ancient taverns serving as a place where one could find erotic pleasure. It was in these establishments where the goddess of love was said to reign. To this end, prayers to the goddess, on clay tablets, were featured as a means of ensuring patronage with prostitutes frequenting these ancient taverns in search of patrons (Leick, 2003:164).

In association with the taverns, commercial prostitution was an acceptable practice, although the places where they could ply their trade were restricted to certain locations like the tavern. It was not uncommon for a family to offer a female dependent, like a daughter, to the Ancient Near Eastern version of a pimp, or to dedicate them into temple service as a cultic functionary to earn a living (Stol, 2006:493). This is probably why Jewish fathers were warned not to give their daughters into prostitution (Lv 19:29), for it promoted further debauchery in the land

(Sprinkle, 2003:749). Additionally, Stol relates how ancient Greek writers describe an ancient Babylonian custom that entailed a woman offering her body to a total stranger in the temple of the goddess of love at least once in her lifetime[52]. Not surprisingly, cultic prostitution[53] was a familiar fixture in the pagan temples of the day, which included certain priests who served the cult of Ishtar. These male cult functionaries had their masculinity transformed into femininity (Jastrow, 1898:74; Jones, 2000:449; Leick, 2003:147-169; Stol, 2006:494; Von Soden, 1994:195;). Consequently, they cross-dressed, wore makeup, carried feminine symbols, danced, and functioned as androgynous occult shamans while they delivered the sick from the power of demons. It seems that their perceived power came from transgressing established boundaries.

Concerning the issue of homosexuality, ancient Mesopotamian law was somewhat vague. This has caused a difference of opinion among scholars about the permissibility of consensual male-male behaviour in secular life. The two primary Middle Assyrian Laws (MAL §19 & §20)[54] that discuss homosexuality lack detail, which has served as grist for the scholars:

19: If a seignior started a rumour against his neighbour in private, saying, “People have lain repeatedly with him,” or he said to him in a brawl in the presence of (other) people, “People have lain repeatedly with you; I will prosecute you,” since he is not able to prosecute (him) (and) did not prosecute (him), they shall flog that seignior fifty (times) with staves (and) he shall do the work of the king for one full month; they shall castrate him and he shall also pay one talent of lead.
20: If a seignior lay with his neighbour, when they have prosecuted him (and) convicted him, they shall lie with him (and) turn him into a eunuch.

Middle Assyrian Law §19 addresses the situation where an individual makes an unsubstantiated accusation against another male of the same status, claiming he has been the passive partner in an act of sodomy. Davidson (2007:134) points out that this implies that such acts were “shameful and degrading” while indicating a consensual same-sex relationship. It is Wold

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[52] DeYoung (1987:11) cites Yamauchi regarding the same cultic ritual. Likewise, Oswalt (2009:56-57) references a similar account from the Roman author Lucius, who describes the same custom in the ancient Phoenician city of Byblos, where local women were expected to prostitute themselves to a stranger one day during the festival of Adonis (Baal) or suffer the consequences of having her hair shorn. Also see Herodotus (1890 §199).

[53] Hoffner (1973:82) contends that there is some dispute among scholars about the nature of the function of these male cult functionaries. The vast majority of sources consulted for this work indicate that androgyny and cultic homosexual acts were performed by these *assinnu, kulu’u*, and *kurgarru*, which is what Leick (2003:160) refers to as *sag-ur-sag*.

[54] See Pritchard (1958:181).

(1998:45-46) who believes that the Akkadian verb *naku* "lain repeatedly" in Middle Assyrian Law §19 is iterative, implying consent. But as no witnesses were able to verify the accusations, the accuser receives *lex talionis*. It is, therefore, reasoned that, since such a heavy penalty is required for the accuser, consensual homosexuality during this period was viewed with serious disapproval (Davidson, 2007:135).

The casuistic proscription in Middle Assyrian Law § 20 has been variously translated to mean that a man who "forces" or "rapes" another man[55] is to be sodomized and turned into a eunuch (*lex talionis*). Again, it depends on how the verb *naku* is translated. Wold (1998:46), citing the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (*CAD*), makes a compelling case for making the verb iterative, that is to say, a repeated action. This would certainly militate against translating it with the idea of "force" or "aggression"[56]; it would rather convey that same-sex behaviour should be seen as an illicit activity even when consensual. As with Middle Assyrian Law §19, the severity of the penalty indicates that it was a serious offense. But this cannot account for the active partner alone being punished.

It could be that, beyond the cultus and male cult functionaries, homosexuality among men of the same social standing was viewed rather negatively and discouraged by the serious nature of the attached penalties. Further indication of this can be deduced from the paucity of homosexual scenes in Mesopotamian art and victory depictions from war, where one would expect to see "acts of humiliation and domination" (Davidson, 2007:139; cf. Wold, 1998:50). Conversely, Greek art is rather replete with various homoerotic depictions. All of which underscores their promotion of the same. Add to this the sparsity of homoerotic depictions, the promotion of marriage for the purpose of producing and the raising children, and it becomes clear that these ancient Sumerians would have reason not to actively encourage homosexuality. Yet this must all be compared with the sexual liminality fostered by the male cult functionaries who functioned in the temples of Ishtar (Nyarenchi, 2004:96; Von Soden, 1994:195) and gender ambiguity that attended these male prostitutes (Eichrodt, 1967:126-127; Leick, 2003:151). All of this has led Leick to conclude that the ancient Mesopotamians had an "ambiguous attitude towards marginal sexuality" that condoned "all sexual behaviour", including some forms of extramarital activity (Leick, 2003:151, 169). To this, Learner (1986:246) similarly adds that the cultic myths and rituals fostered a view that "sexuality is civilizing and pleasing to the gods." This has led scholars like Harrison (1980:191) to conclude that "homosexuality was known and

[55] This is the opinion of Wenham (1991:360), although he is not definite.

[56] While Nissinen (1998:25-26) agrees that the verb *naku* is iterative, he still contends that it refers to a case of forced aggression, because he views the act as not between two equals and, therefore, coerced.

practiced in the Ancient Near East as a form of carnal indulgence from very early times" (cf. Nyarenchi, 2004:76).

3.2.2.2 The Ancient Near Eastern context of the Hittites

The ancient Hittite customs regarding homosexuality are not known. Outside of ancient Israel, the Hittites were the only other Ancient Near Eastern society that legislated (§187-188 and § 199-200a) against the act of bestiality[57] in their legal literature, although it is not as direct and definite as Old Testament laws (Ex 22:19 [18]; Lv 18:23; 20:15-16; Dt 27:21) concerning the same.

Hittite law condemned sexual relations between a human and a cow, sheep, or pig and decreed such *hurkel*[58], which was a capital offense with no right of appeal for either man or beast. At the king's discretion, however, such a severe sentence could be commuted, with both the man and beast banished from the city (Imparati, 2004:577). On the other hand, copulation between a human and a horse or mule did not constitute an offense and, therefore, warranted no penalty. Hittite law §199 granted an allowance in instances where an amorous animal might initiate the relationship. In this case, no guilt is ascribed (Hoffner, 1973:83). In relation to incest laws, the Hittites decreed (Hoffner, 2006:558; Imparati, 2004:577) that a man was not permitted intercourse with his mother, daughter, son, or step-mother, for each of these was deemed a *hurkel* relationship and could receive a capital sentence. In all of this, the mention of homosexuality is conspicuously absent and is, therefore, never pronounced *hurkel.* The only exception to this is when there is a father-son union, but then it is the fact of incest that is condemned, not because it is of a same-sex nature.

Based on the evidence given in Hittite law, no conclusions can be drawn concerning their attitude toward homosexuality. One can only conjecture from silence, unlike in the case of the biblical legislation concerning sexuality. Yet, given pagan fertility cult and rites, it is not unreasonable to surmise a situation similar to the Mesopotamians (3.2.2.1).

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[57] In Ancient Near Eastern omen literature, there are numerous examples of bestiality between the gods/goddesses and various animals. Ugaritic mythology records that the god Baal copulated with a heifer. In ancient Babylon (Mesopotamia), the Gilgamesh epic details how Enkidu had intercourse with animal companions, until he was seduced by a cultic female prostitute (Naude, 1997:1198; cf. Nissinen, 2010:73-77). Wenham (1979:250) adds that Egyptian, Canaanite, and Hittite sources were all familiar with bestiality. Currid (2004:244) cites the ANE's general acceptance toward bestiality as being rooted in "a magical, religious backdrop." It is even reputed (Keil & Delitzsch, 2002:599) that there was a cult in the eastern delta that involved sexual intercourse between women and goats.

[58] The term *hurkel* is defined by Hoffner as an illegal coupling that "describes the nature of the act and mode of punishment" (1973:83).

3.2.2.3 The Ancient Near Eastern context of Egypt

Egyptian attitudes regarding sexuality and homosexuality are not explicit. Ascertaining an ancient Egyptian mind-set on sexual customs and homosexuality is difficult, because there is no extant legal literature (Speiser, 1967:547; Wold, 1998:43-44) to outline their indicative cultural parameters related to these matters. But omen literature does offer some incomplete insights. What is more certain is that the ancient Egyptians had a relaxed attitude toward marriage and were not averse to either polygamy or incest among the royal family (Albright, 1994:128; Tyldesley, 1994:20-21).

It is apparent that Egyptians frowned upon adultery (Pinch, 2004:375; Tyldesley, 1994:23), although it was not treated as a capital crime. Instead, Egyptians took a more subjective approach with varied responses from public humiliation and censure, to public beating. Erotic depictions were also somewhat rare (Pinch, 2004:375), although there are a few existing examples of ostraca and graffiti portraying human sexuality in a humorous manner. During the 4^{th}, 5^{th}, and 6^{th} dynasties, there is iconographic evidence to suggest heightened experimentation with male homosexuality (Reader, 2000:205-207). There is currently no evidence suggesting the same regarding lesbianism.

Construed from omen records, homosexuality appears to have been viewed with public scorn, especially toward the passive partner. In omen literature, Seth, who was the sinister god of chaos, was portrayed as a bisexual who humiliated his brother Horus in same-sex rape before his own humiliation. So it is impossible to determine the prevailing attitude (Pinch, 2004:376) regarding this matter. Wenham (1991:361) does claim — although the evidence related to same-sex activity is lacking — that during the Amarna period, iconography portrayed merging of the sexes by almost “obliterating” all the gender distinctives. This was a form of ancient gender-bending, which, by way of implication, indicates some activities in accordance with this blurring of gender. This, combined with Reader’s view above, suggests that Egypt’s flirtation with homosexuality was periodic.

This information, however, is hardly sufficient to make any absolute pronouncements concerning their stance on homosexuality. As with the other Ancient Near Eastern societies committed to the fertility cults, the Egyptians valued marriage for the purpose of procreation and raising children. One could, therefore, deduce that consensual same-sex activity was not very common, although it may have been tolerated.

3.2.2.4 The Ancient Near Eastern context of Canaan

Canaanite thinking on sexuality and homosexuality were predicated on their pagan fertility practices.[59] Unfortunately, the Ugaritic texts are inconclusive about Canaanite opinions regarding sexuality, although the biblical record is certain of the occurrence of such acts (Lv 18:3, 24, 30). Kaiser (1991:117) is confident, based on Ugaritic myth, that the Canaanites "freely indulged in human sacrifice, profanation, homosexuality, and bestiality." Ross concurs with Kaiser's (2002:345) assessment of Canaanite sexuality, as the entire fertility cult centred on sacred prostitution of both the male and female varieties (Caragounis, 2007:17).[60] These religious practices seeped into the fabric of everyday Canaanite life, which ultimately led to their destruction and, eventually, the downfall of Israel. This, in part, is why the differences between Canaan and Israel had to be so pronounced in the sexual realm (Rooker, 2000:240).

To illustrate the Canaanite fertility cult, Jones (2000:449; cf. Wenham, 1991:362) describes the relationship between the ancient Syrian goddess Cybele and the Canaanite goddess Anat, i.e., Ishtar, who bore an uncanny resemblance to the Syrian goddess Cybele. In personality, Anat was both headstrong and unsubmissive, while her physical features included a youthful, nubile woman who manifested the male qualities of a bearded soldier. All of which leaves scholars asking whether Anat was androgynous, bisexual, or both, producing a sexual duality that Leick (2003:157) claims "always maintained" a feminine identity. Jones (2000:449) believes that Anat "symbolizes the mystical union, which was celebrated by her worshipers as ritual enactment of the *hieros gamos* [sacred spiritual marriage].[61] The Old Testament gives some indication that Canaanite religion included homosexual androgyny, against which Israel was to be on guard." It was this kind of activity and worship that eventually infiltrated Israel's worship and lifestyle[62] (1 Ki 15:12; 22:46; 2 Ki 23:7; Job 36:13-14), and it was for this reason proactively proscribed in Deuteronomy 23:17-18 to include the prohibition against cross-dressing (Dt 22:5). In sum, the

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[59] See Van Der Toorn (2006:2047-2056) for an overall survey the ancient Canaanite religion, theology, and its relationship to the politics of the day.

[60] Life in the ANE, including Canaan, was heavily influenced by the cultic fertility rites and traditions, with homosexuality and bestiality being just two ways the Canaanite worshipper could affect the desired outcomes with nature (Nyarenchi, 2004:98). In Gordon's assessment, the Canaanites had "no moral issue" with "bestiality" (1958:99), which explains the polemic from the Old Testament. Caragounis (1997:28-31) details the extent of cultic prostitution, with examples from places like the ancient Cappadocian city of Comana, where there were over 6 000 male and female *hierodouloi* (sacred slaves) dedicated to the temple of Ma. Also see Craigie (1983:26-43).

[61] See Von Soden's (1994:68) discussion on sacred marriage in ancient Babylon.

[62] Naude (1997:1203) explains: "The ANE cult of sex continuously posed a threat to the integrity of Israel's life. Indeed, Israelites up to the return from Babylon were often involved in this cult. Orgies of a sexual nature were the consequence whenever Israel threw off, for a short while, the yoke of the law, as witness the incidents of the golden calf (Exod. 32:6,19) and the whoring with Moabite women in honor of Baal Peor (Num. 25:1)."

Canaanites were devoid of any meaningful sexual boundaries. This would not have left their day-to-day lives unaffected by this moral vacuum.

In summation, the answer to the question regarding the Ancient Near Eastern perspective on homosexuality and same-sex combinations should be cautious, given the limited and fragmentary information. Yet, it appears fairly certain in a setting devoid of sexual boundaries that homosexuality occurred: The presence and sanction of bestiality, commercial prostitution, combined with the practice of cultic prostitution, produced a certain amount of sexual licence and moral ambiguity. Equally certain, male cult functionaries practiced ritual homosexuality in the temple corridors throughout most of the Ancient Near East, with almost certain cultural influence. It is well established that there was ambiguity in relation to sexual mores throughout the Ancient Near Eastern region (Oswalt, 2009:71-78). This means that homosexuality was a known and accepted custom, although the passive role was evidently universally disdained. It is hard to believe that what was practiced in the sacred precincts of the temples did not somehow season the day-to-day culture of the people, for one's worship is bound to impact everyday life in some measure; after all, "like people, like priest" (Hs 4:9). This nexus here seems inevitable — although this may have been tempered by regional concerns, epochs, and the general commitment to fertility doctrines with their pragmatic outcomes on promoting the nuclear family. This prompted an accent on procreation and child rearing, which were seen as a blessing. So on the one hand, aspects of the Ancient Near East were characterized by cultic eroticism, which was entertained to some extent in the ebb-and-flow of the ancient's normal course of life. But on the other hand, domestic realities and exigencies may have curbed such sexual excess to some degree, depending on the place and time.

It is the position of this dissertation that, while there were mitigating domestic concerns that cautioned the aggressive promotion of homosexuality, there were also cultic and religious realities in opposition to the social conventions of the day. That said, the Ancient Near East as a whole must have tolerated some degree of same-sex behaviour, so long as it was not by force. It is quite likely that the acceptance and popularity of homosexuality varied according to both region and time, with some regions and time frames expressing a greater measure of openness than in other locations and eras. Little is said or intimated regarding lesbian forms of same-sex activity in the Ancient Near East, so forming any kind of quantifying conclusion is difficult.[63]

The Bible confirms the reality and threat of the Canaanite fertility cults, with God divinely putting the appropriate prohibitions in place to warn and protect the Israelites. The regulations God

[63] Both Bell (1998:244) and Caragounis (2007:31) state that in both ancient Greece and the Graeco-Roman period, lesbianism occurred, but it was not as common as the male variety.

gave governing sexuality and homosexuality are reliant on the doctrine of creation (Caragounis, 1997:30; 2007:22; Nyarenchi, 2004:108; Wenham, 1991:363), where God is seen as the author of gender differentiation, monogamy, and the mandator for the first heterosexual couple to "be fruitful and multiply." The creation account counters the Ancient Near Eastern cultic blurring of gender distinctions[64] and, in the words of Gagnon (2005c:377), "replaces it with man [who] should not take the role of women in sex because God created distinct sexes and designed them for complementary pairing". All of which encourages the "one flesh" doctrine (Gn 2:24). It can be concluded, in contrast to the Ancient Near East, that the Bible is unique and unambiguous in its condemnation of all forms of creational sexual distortion, including homosexuality and male cultic prostitution (DeYoung, 1987:26).

3.2.3 A grammatical-historical analysis of the lexical/grammatical landscape of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13:

Outside the general context of Leviticus being embedded within the larger covenantal context of the Pentateuch, there is an interrelationship between Leviticus 18 and 20, sandwiching either side the unit found in 18-20. Beyond this, there is the extended socio-cultural context of the adjacent Ancient Near Eastern cultures and pagan religions. With these contexts in mind, the particular lexical and grammatical dynamics of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 will now be considered in light of pro-gay assertions.

In the passages under investigation (Lv 18:22; 20:13), there are three words that each of the two passages share that, when properly understood in context, will aid in better understanding the original intent of the author, viz. (1) תּוֹעֵבָה (abomination), (2) שָׁכַב (lie with), and (3) זָכָר (male). Each of these terms will be lexically studied in order to better understand how each relates to the meaning of the whole.

3.2.3.1 The grammatical-historical analysis of תּוֹעֵבָה

The most controversial of the terms used in both passages is the noun translated "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה). It is found 117 times in the Old Testament. The liberal use of this particular noun is a witness to its importance (Youngblood, 1980:976). It is notable that this lexical unit is found only six times in the book of Leviticus: twice in the singular (18:22 and 20:13) and four times in the plural form (18:26, 27, 29, 30). All six usages fall within the immediate range of the direct sexual

[64] The Old Testament laws on sexuality are very unique to the Ancient Near East because they find their ground in a transcendent God who gives laws that are in keeping with his transcendent nature. God is wholly other than his creation and should be described as asexual, i.e., suprasexual, because sexuality cannot be attributed to Him. He, therefore, cannot, and should not, be worshiped through erotically based rituals and ceremonies (Oswalt, 1979:33-35; Oswalt, 2009:71-75). It is the transcendent nature of God that has far reaching implications for human morality and ethics, which is why Yahweh never had a consort (Eichrodt, 1961:223).

proscriptions God gave the Hebrews. It is within this context of specific prohibitions that the word must be defined and applied.

The basic definition of תּוֹעֵבָה is that of a "disgust" or "aversion" that is "affectively laden" (Gerstenberger, 1997:1429); Or, as Kaiser (1994:1127) describes it, "to hate" or "to abhor", in this instance the practice itself, not the persons. DeYoung adds (2000:48) the emphasis that תּוֹעֵבָה identifies what is "detestable", containing a sure rhetorical force (cf. Sherwood, 2002:73). Thus, תּוֹעֵבָה is a term that conveys a very strong response of repugnance or revulsion, conveying the strongest condemnation (Hess, 2008:743), which serves as "the opposite of *rāṣôn*, '[YHWH's] favor'" (Sherwood, 2002:73).

This lexeme (תּוֹעֵבָה) has a wide range of nuances,[65] including the physical, ritual, and the ethical spheres, where both man and God can find something or someone abhorrent. This abhorrence, according to Grisanti, extends to persons, things, or practices, which is the focus (practices) here in Leviticus 18 and 20. Grisanti (1997:315) points to the "covenantal associations" of תּוֹעֵבָה in light of the unique communal aspects of Israel's obedience to the "covenantal objectives" as given by Yahweh. In this milieu, when something is deemed an "abomination" by God, it is because it is antithetical to the essence of his nature and character (Gerstenberger, 1997:1430; Grisanti, 1997:315). This is to be avoided by Israel so that a right relationship with Yahweh can be maintained. In essence, there are certain things and practices that are incompatible with the holy character of the LORD and that are, therefore, to be avoided by Israel. This is in order to promote a healthy relationship with God — a relationship that is in accordance with the nature of his covenant (Ex 19:5-6) with Israel, who, by way of extension, are to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

While the word "abomination" can be used of things deemed ritually unclean[66] (Dt 14:3-8), like unclean animals that are an "abomination", it is frequently used in the moral and ethical domain (Gagnon, 2001:118; Milgrom, 2000:1569-1570; Youngblood, 1980:977). In fact, DeYoung (2000:48) concludes that two-thirds of the 117 occurrences of the noun have an "ethical dimension"[67]. In Leviticus, the context is distinctly sexual in nature, and the "abomination"

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[65] In contrast to pro-gay interpreters who insist that "abomination" is ritually defined in Leviticus, Bailey (2005:250) sees the term as having a "heavy emphasis on ethics" in the holiness code of 17-26, because elsewhere in Scripture the word has a broad usage including a number of moral transgressions such as theft and murder (Jr 7:9; Pr 20:10; 12:2).

[66] For an example of a wide semantic range of the word תּוֹעֵבָה, see Gagnon (2001:118-120).

[67] It was pro-gay interpreter Boswell (1981:100-102) who asserted that the word תּוֹעֵבָה has a rather narrow usage in biblical literature, signifying that which is ritually or cultically related (also see Bird, 2000:160-161; Helminiak, 2004:43-54), but it does not demarcate that which would be classified in the moral realm, like rape or theft.

should not be limited strictly to the ceremonial, because the context dictates that there is a moral principle that exceeds any cultic limits one may try to impose on the word (DeYoung, 1987:19). As DeYoung (1987:20) describes it, Leviticus 18 and 20 are highlighting to Israel that the sin of the Amorites (Gn 15:16) has blossomed and now "most, if not all, of the practices [sexual proscriptions in Lv 18 and 20] are universally abhorrent to God".

So it is in the unique context of incest, adultery, child sacrifice, and bestiality that one finds the substantive "abomination" describing male-male intercourse:

Leviticus 18:22 "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination."

Leviticus 20:13 "If *there is* a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

Of all the varying sexual proscriptions imparted in both Leviticus 18 and 20, it is same-sex activity that is designated תּוֹעֵבָה in the singular in 18:22 and 20:13. The subsequent plural form found in 18:26, 27, 29, and 30 underwrites all the aforementioned sexual injunctions as an "abomination" that, if tolerated by the Hebrews, will warrant the holy opprobrium on the nation as whole, with God "vomiting" them from the land before they are "cut off". It is significant that the verse designates male-male activity an "abomination" and "detestable act", but never uses the term in any cultic or ritual sense in the remainder of Leviticus.

In Leviticus 11, where various animals are listed as "unclean", it is notable that the term used to describe unclean animals is שֶׁקֶץ. It is used in Leviticus 11:10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 23, 41, 42, 43, and 20:25 to designate some animal as "unclean". The only time תּוֹעֵבָה is ever used of unclean animals is in Deuteronomy 14:3-8, which is a different context. Grisanti (1997:316) explains that שֶׁקֶץ has a much narrower range of meaning used to describe those ritual violations that transgress Yahweh worship, like contact with unclean animals. What is recognized by many is that the Levitical use of תּוֹעֵבָה is used to express God's moral revulsion at those sexual acts which pervert the heterosexual paradigm he established at creation in Genesis 1 and 2[68]

[68]Grisanti (1997:316) further explains: "Yahweh also loathed homosexuality (Lev 18:22; 20:13) and transvestism (Deut 22:5). Since the other five occurrences of תּוֹעֵבָה in Lev refer either to Canaanite practices in general (Lev 18:26, 27, 29, 30) or homosexuality in particular (Lev 20:13), it is apparent that homosexuality was a prominent part of Canaanite practice, most likely an element of their worship (cult prostitution). This practice of a man lying with another man 'after the manner of lying with a woman' (Levine, 1989:123) was abhorrent to Yahweh because it perverted the heterosexual relationship ordained by him (Gen 2:24; 4:1). Anyone who committed this abomination must be executed (Lev 20:13). The eleven tribes of Israel sought to enforce this mandate when the men of the city of Gibeah descended to the detestable ways of the surrounding Canaanites (Judg. 19)."

(Davidson, 2007:151-152; Haas, 1999:9; Kaiser, 1991:118-119; Oswalt, 1979:60, 67-69; Taylor, 1995:5). It is quite certain that the variety of sexual sins regulated against, like male-male behaviour in Leviticus 18 and 20, should not be limited merely to the realm of ritual being reduced to being solely a Jewish sin. That the Egyptians and Canaanites were held accountable (Lv 18:3; 24-30) by God for committing these same abominations, indicates a universal application by applying these regulations to "all people everywhere at all times" (DeYoung, 2000:50).

Further indication that תּוֹעֵבָה is more than a boundary term for that which is deemed strictly ceremonial can be found in the Pentateuchal context in Deuteronomy 12:31, where child immolation (human sacrifice) is condemned in the strongest terms with the divine pronouncement: "abomination". Then, in Deuteronomy 22:5, transvestism (cross-dressing) is declared to be an "abomination". This is because, beyond the *prima facie* description of cross-dressing, is the implied violation of cultic prostitution with its androgynous priests, who may have engaged in homosexual acts in the temple (Craigie, 1976:288; Grisanti, 1997:315; McConville, 2002:337). As a result, the same תּוֹעֵבָה verdict is declared on both female and male cult prostitution[69], which will be considered later, in Deuteronomy 23:17-18.

In his treatment of תּוֹעֵבָה, Gagnon (2001:118) helpfully presents three ways Leviticus delineates the nuances of "abomination" in the text: (1) a sex act that is completely detestable and abhorrent to Yahweh (18:22); (2) a sex act that rendered guilty parties deserving of the death penalty and in danger of being "cut off" from God's people, God's land, and God (18:29; 20:13); and (3) a sex act that invites the consuming wrath of God on the nation if such an "abomination" is left unpunished (18:26; 20:2, 4). This indicates the moral and ethical nature of such offenses, which were beyond the realm of purity rites, signalling the gravity of the infraction.

In translating תּוֹעֵבָה, a variety of terms are used by the Septuagint[70] translators to translate the Old Testament term, but in Leviticus the Septuagint renders "abomination" βδέλυγμα five times in the singular and plural (18:22, 26, 27, 29; 20:13) and βδελύσσομαι (in 18:30). Wold contends that the preference of the translators for βδέλυγμα was to place the singular violation of homosexuality in 18:22 and 20:13, and the corresponding summary of all other mentioned sexual contraventions, into the realm of impurity that represents "impurity generated by

[69] Worshippers would engage in sexual rituals with the pagan temple cult functionaries in an effort to convince the gods/goddesses to provide fertility for the worshipper's field, animals, and family. For the Jews to partake in these ancient pagan rites was an affront to the God who promised to "bless" them and thus provide all they needed.

[70] See Wevers (1997:283, 321) notes related to the LXX.

improper acts [that are] deliberate, defiling, and a violation of the natural order for sexual relations. The impurity generated by them is not merely ritual, as Boswell says, but moral. And because the impurity is sexual and deliberate, it is the most dangerous kind. If words, like people, are known by the company they keep, תּוֹעֵבָה belongs to a special category and cannot be classified as a mere synonym for idolatry. The Levitical writer reserved תּוֹעֵבָה for sexual crimes punishable by *kareth*" (Wold, 1998:113). The point Wold makes[71] is that βδέλυγμα, and its synonym ἀνομία, do not distinguish intrinsic wrong from ritual purity, as many pro-gay interpreters like Boswell insist, but combine the two ideas. This results in there being little distinction between ἀνομία and βδέλυγμα[72].

Based on the balance of the above evidence, it can be concluded that Yahweh had a holy hatred (תּוֹעֵבָה) for all who defied the sexual injunctions detailed in Leviticus 18:6-23 and 20:9-21. In the Levitical context, homosexuality is singled out as that which is antagonistic to his holy nature and will. It is a direct violation of his creation order (Gn 1:27; 2:24) and is, by default, morally repugnant whether it is violated religiously or socio-culturally. It is vital to add that, in each case cited, it is the offending practice that is said to be an "abomination", not those committing the offense.

3.2.3.2 The grammatical-historical analysis of שָׁכַב

The verb שָׁכַב is another important term to consider in bringing greater clarity to the meaning of the two passages (Lv 18:22; 20:13). While the verb's grammatical taxonomy is crucial for illuminating meaning, first the lexical sense will be considered. When שָׁכַב appears in the Qal, as in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the word has the primary meaning of "to lie down", like in death, or "to lie down" for sexual relations (Hamilton, 1980:921). When the idiom "lie with" is employed in its various forms in a sexual context, it is referring to illicit sexual activity that deviates from creation order (Williams, 1997:102), with the possible exceptions of Genesis 30:15-16 and 2 Samuel 11:11 (Hamilton, 1980:921). Moreover, this verb specifies the various forms of proscribed sexual combinations[73] like incest, bestiality, and homosexuality (Lv 18:22; 20:11, 12,

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[71] DeYoung (2000:48-52, 65-68) underscores the same idea.

[72] DeYoung (2000:51, 65-68) outlines a number of New Testament uses of βδέλυγμα. Among these is a reference to Revelation 21:8, where those who are thrown into the Lake of Fire for being, among other things that seem to parallel Leviticus 18 and 20, "abominable" i.e., ἐβδελυγμένοι and where the "abominable" are distinguished from the "idolaters".

[73] Hamilton (1980:921) provides examples from Exodus 22:16 [15 H] where fornication is forbidden, and Deuteronomy 22:22, where the death penalty is imposed on those who are caught in adultery. Hamilton maintains that many of these sexual deviations are a direct result of the ancient pagans elevating sex to religious status, thereby eroticizing religion in the process. Implied is that the eroticized religion then served as a justification for their pansexuality.

13, 18; Dt 27:20, 21, 22, 23).[74] Gagnon (2001:111) adds that when שָׁכַב is used of heterosexual intercourse, it normally has the man as the focus. Based on the illicit emphasis the verb has in sexual settings, it is easy to see why it was used frequently in the Leviticus pericope in Chapter 20. It is used for underscoring those sexual activities that are at variance with the creation pattern established in the beginning.

The sum of the lexical data reveals that to "lie down" in the sexual context of Leviticus 18 and 20 expresses a deviation from the creation template for sexuality (Gn 1-2), indicating a sexual distortion from the ontological norm (Radner, 2008:190).

3.2.3.3 The grammatical-historical analysis of זָכָר

Another lexical aid for interpreting 18:22 and 20:13 is found in the Hebrew noun זָכָר. This (זָכָר) noun serves as an inclusive noun that prohibits every kind, category, and age of male from participating in same-sex intercourse (DeYoung, 2000:52; McComiskey, 1980:243; Peterson, 2004:7; Taylor, 1995:5). This excludes all forms of homosexuality, even the ancient Grecian practice of pederasty between an older male and a young teenage boy, which was something that was fairly common in ancient Greece.

Genesis 1:27 uses זָכָר in correspondence with נְקֵבָה, which is in contrast to Genesis 2 where the word combination used to refer to the man and the woman is אִישׁ and אִשָּׁה. Hamilton explains (1997:1107; 1990:138-139) that the former terms in Genesis 1:27 reference the biological side of the two genders, emphasizing clear gender distinction based on physical and biological factors which are related to the image bearing properties of each.[75] In contrast, Genesis 2 has an emphasis on the psychosocial aspects of the man and woman, accentuating the relational aspects of the first couple's union, with אִשָּׁה indicating Eve was taken from אִישׁ i.e., Adam. Hamilton (1997:1107-1108) makes three interesting observations related to the pairing of זָכָר and נְקֵבָה comparison: (1) in Genesis 1:27 the plural of both terms is employed "male and female he created them" which, Hamilton believes is an argument against the notion of androgyny which was common in the whole Ancient Near Eastern cult/ritual complex; (2) the Genesis 1:27 phrasing strongly implies that both "male and female" share the image of God in equal measure being co-equal in essence. Hence, this does not preclude functional distinctions

[74] There are numerous examples of the illicit nature of שָׁכַב in the Old Testament narrative literature that further serve to illustrate the illicit tone of the verb when used in a sexual context: Genesis 19:22; 26:10; 34:2, 7; 35:22; 1 Samuel 2:22; 2 Samuel 13:11, 14.

[75] Wold (1998:104) explains that the נְקֵבָה/זָכָר pairing in Genesis 1:27 "enjoyed special relationship with creation and the image of God … they were given as overseers of creation". In light of the biological aspects freighted in the terms, the overriding implication is that as a result of their image bearing status, coupled with their mandate to have dominion over creation, it suggests that it is the impetus for procreation. This is the fertility the pagans sought in their religious rites.

between the two genders; (3) in comparing both word groups זָכָר and נְקֵבָה with אִישׁ and אִשָּׁה, sexuality is expressed by both word pairings: with זָכָר and נְקֵבָה stressing the bio-physical aspects (givens) of sexuality, while אִישׁ and אִשָּׁה stress the psychosocial side of sexuality.

In relation to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the noun זָכָר is significant because it rules out all aspects of male homosexuality between all men in the human species regardless of age or kind. Wold (1998:104) argues that if the word אִישׁ or אָדָם been used in place of זָכָר, then one could conceivably make a case that only homosexuality between adult males is proscribed, with pederasty being approved. But such is not the case. By making use of the distinct term זָכָר , the writer of the Levitical legislation is making a clear sexual distinction that is marking an overarching prohibition on all manner of male-male sexual congress. This leaves little room for finding lexical loopholes in the text to legitimize some other aberrant form of male homosexuality. It would have been understood by those original readers of Leviticus that all varieties of male homosexuality were strictly off limits. Israel's God reserved the strongest censure for violators the male-male prohibition. It did not matter whether the contravention took place in the temple under the auspices of a religious ritual, or in everyday civil life, this was an inclusive ban from the God who had redeemed them out of Egypt to make them a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" for his glory. In keeping with his holy purpose for Israel, Yahweh proscribes all pagan sexual practices that pervert and deviate from the creation paradigm. This includes all forms of male-male intercourse. In part, this is what it meant for Israel to be the LORD's treasured possession in covenant with him.

By stressing the bio-physical use of זָכָר in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the Levitical legislation implies that the male-male proscription violates God's created order. It is against nature in the bio-physical sense of the word. This negates any "oneness" a same-sex couple might think they have achieved.

3.2.4 The grammatical-historical use of grammar and syntax

In close relationship with lexical study of key words found in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, is the grammatical and syntactical enquiry regarding the meaning of those isolated words when they are brought into a grammatical-syntactical construct. Now after considering the biblical context, Ancient Near Eastern context, and the lexical import of key words in 18:22 and 20:13, some of the salient grammar and syntax of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 will be surveyed in order to uncover the original author's intent:

3.2.4.1 Preliminary grammatical-syntactical observations

There are a couple of preliminary grammatical thoughts that precede the probing of 18:22 and 20:13. This will help establish the grammatical tone that pervades Leviticus 18 and extends through Chapter 20. The first observation that sets the tenor for 18:6-23 is found in the opening phrase of 18:6 "None of you shall approach …" with a notable emphasis on "None of you". This is a translation of the Hebrew phrase אִישׁ אִישׁ which Kaiser concludes (1994:1125) is to be idiomatically interpreted as "no man", or as it is translated "None of you". The grammatical contours of this idiomatic phrase showcase two ideas: first, it may implicate more than just the intended Israelites, implying that the inclusion of all humans, and hence, underscoring the universal nature of these regulations in 18:6-23[76]; secondly, and more sure, this particular construction lays emphasis on the strength of the prohibitions that are about to be detailed — that these are activities which will not be tolerated by God and, therefore, should not be tolerated by you either. There is absolute abruptness that declares "No man is to sexually approach a relative … a member of his own flesh."[77] Rather than connoting ambiguity, as some pro-gay interpreters believe, there is an unequivocal clarity and directness explicated in the text about what behaviour is unacceptable.

Lending further strength to the moral emphasis of Leviticus 18:1-30, Sherwood (2002:73) suggests that the verb "to walk" הָלַךְ (18:3) serves as a metaphor pointing to the moral uprightness of one's life. He also points to the moral usage of the verb קָרַב "to draw near, or approach" (18:6), which he says forms a bridge from its earlier sacral uses to a contextual nuance associated with sexual ethics in Chapter 18 (Sherwood, 2002:73), thereby, forging a link between sacrifice and sexual morality. All of which builds a moral framework around the chapter that brackets the ethical import of the meaning. The moral message is then personalized and individualized by the repeated use of the second person singular possessive suffixes employed to strengthen these apodictic laws. In the words of Sherwood (2002:73), this "makes it more immediate and personal … they are not about someone else's family, but yours."

An additional consideration in the overall inference through these apodictic commands is the undergirding assumption that these potential sexual liaisons are deemed to be deliberate

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[76] This seems to correspond with Davidson's (2007:150) idea if the masculine singular pronoun "you" in 18:6-23 being a gender inclusive designation, that, while it certainly embraces all the Hebrew men, by way of implication could be applied to all men everywhere.

[77] The opening clause in 18:6 "You shall not approach" is a euphemism for sexual intercourse (*HALOT*, 1999:1133; Kaiser, 1991:115) that is further explained by "to lie with" (Lev. 20:11), to "take" or to "marry a wife" (Lv 20:21). Genesis 20:4 and Isaiah 8:3 illustrate the usage of this verb קָרַב in both narrative and prophetic contexts. In the Levitical context under examination קָרַב appears in 18:6, 14, 19; 20:16. In concert with the sexual euphemism לְגַלּוֹת עֶרְוָה "to expose the nakedness of" Kiuchi (2007:331) contends that 18:6 is establishing a precedent that binds all of 18:6-23 together for the singular aim of the originally created sexual order upon the premise that humanity is fallen.

choices on the part of the law recipients. The verbs institute an overall pattern that suggests human volition is a part of the equation. The Hebrews have a choice to make regardless of their desires (orientation). The early negative verbs in the preamble in 18:3 communicate this idea לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ (do not do) and לֹא תֵלֵכוּ (do not follow) i.e., they are "not to do" as the Egyptians and Canaanites, nor are they "to follow" or "walk" in their ways related to these sexual injunctions. Both Hebrew verbs are imperfects preceded by the negative adverbial particle לֹא, which intensifies the negation.

Conversely, the positive commands in 18:4 תַּעֲשׂוּ (you do) and תִּשְׁמְרוּ (you keep) evidence that Israel was able to make a distinct choice in the affirmative to "perform my judgments" and to "keep my statutes" where Yahweh was concerned. Both Qal verbs are imperfect injunctive[78] expressing commands that are as clear-cut as they are potentially effective. The perceived action of the negative verbs in 18:3 in contrast with the positive verbs in 18:4 patently indicates the Hebrews had a choice in the matter. There is no ambiguity about the choices, negative or positive, available to the Israelites, unless the text is intentionally obscured. The arrangement of the Qal imperfect-injunctive verbs with the apodictic form of the directives issued, combines with the nature of the *kareth* penalty[79] for violations of sexual purity. This all strongly indicates that all the sexual activities listed (18:6-23; 20:9-21) are deliberate, premeditated ethical choices that can be volitionally avoided by God's people, if they are seeking to be holy as He himself is holy.

3.2.4.2 Grammatical-syntactical observations in Leviticus 18:22

The grammatical-syntactical analysis of Leviticus 18:22 yields a number of findings that are helpful uncover the meaning of this hotly contested text: An immediate observation of this verse is that it is flanked by the proscription (18:21) against sacrificing children to Molech. This is deemed חָלַל "profane", which meant they misused the name of Yahweh and desecrated his holy name through this pagan rite. On the opposite side of 18:22 is found the prohibition against bestiality (18:23), which was already demonstrated above to be present in the adjoining Ancient Near Eastern cultures. The Levitical writer pronounces this תֶּבֶל "a perversion", or more literally "a disgraceful confusion" that transgresses the boundaries established at creation, where everything that was created was to produce according to "its kind", or species. Bestiality is a

[78] Williams (1992:27, 30-31) briefly discusses the character of Qal imperfect injunctive verbs and the kind of force they carry.

[79] It is Wold who comments most frequently on the *kareth* penalty. Wold (1998:106) contends that to be "cut off" was a penalty imposed by God for defilements that were intentional and "high handed" violations against the law of God (Nm 15:30-31). The "cutting off" was performed by God and it was a direct form of punishment most likely involved premature death (Wold, 1998:285-286). As Wold (1998:106) explains, "The law is based on the ability of the individual to choose whether he or she will obey or face the consequences. The choice to obey the law results in God's blessing: the choice to disobey results in the curse of *kareth*."

gross violation of the creation edict where one species is mismatched with an image bearer of God. It is within this setting of two stated atrocities that the command against male-male intercourse is couched.

Upon initial investigation of 18:22, the word order construction in the Hebrew does not follow the usual verb + subject + direct object + indirect object construction. Rather, what one observes is a word-order construct that begins with the direct object-verb-indirect object: וְאֶת־זָכָר לֹא תִשְׁכַּב . This "fronting", as Wold calls it (1998:102), places the direct object זָכָר at the beginning for the sake of emphasis with the indirect object מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה qualifying the antecedent clause (Dickson, 2002:363), which means the attention is on the sexual activity. It is the sexual act that is characteristic of that which pertains to a woman that is in view. Wold's (1998:102) literal rendering of this construction is, "The male you must not lie with as with a female." This serves to highlight the emphatic accent placed on זָכָר "male", which based on the lexical study of this noun is chronologically gender inclusive enveloping all ages and manner of males. This certainly militates against the idea that what is being proscribed here is simply status[80] based, or age based (Matthews & Benjamin, 1995:13). All males in Israel, Hebrews as well as aliens, were included and proscribed in total (cf. Lv 18:26-27).

Further observation indicates that the beginning of this command is negative with the negative adverbial particle לֹא combining with the negative force of the verb שָׁכַב. This is a Qal feintive (Williams, 1992:27) verb in the imperfect injunctive which conveys a strong command that could be rendered "must" when the negative particle is present. The particle and verb together (Williams, 1992:30-31) "express a prohibition which is stronger than the vetative." Bailey (2005:149) comments that when the negative particle is followed by Qal imperfect, it is then "expressing a permanent negative command." Gesenius' (1910:317) grammar offers valuable commentary on the magnitude of this negative particle/verb combination (emphasis added):

"**To express the definite expectation that something will not happen**. The imperfect with לֹא represents a more emphatic form of prohibition than the jussive with אַל־ (cf. § 109 c), **and corresponds to our *thou shalt not do it!* with the strongest expectation of obedience**, while אַל־ with the jussive is rather a simple warning, *do not that!* Thus לֹא with the imperfect is especially used in enforcing the divine commands, e.g. לֹא תִגְנֹב *thou shalt not steal* Ex 20:15; cf. verses 3, 4, 5, 7, 10 ff. So לֹא with the 3rd pers. perhaps in Pr 16:10."

This emphatic grammatical construct is not debating what kind of male-male homosexuality is permissible, and what is not. On the contrary, Leviticus 18:22 is categorically decreeing that all

[80] The proscription against bestiality equally focuses on the sexual act itself and not the role one is assuming while transgressing, because the purpose clause in 18:23 reveals (Dickson, 2002:361) why the woman was standing there — it was to lay with a beast רָבַע in a sexual way, which is wholly unnatural.

male-male intercourse of every sort — consensual, non-consensual, pederasty, regardless of age, regardless of status, regardless of perceived orientation — must not ever be practiced by any person from the male species period. There are absolutely no circumstances under which this type of sexual behaviour is ever sanctioned by God, as it is contrary to his creation order and defies his very nature and character. Therefore, to rebel against any of the stated commands is assumed to be an intentional determination of the individual's will. In the modern day vernacular the excuse, "I couldn't help myself" falters in the face of the obvious. There are no violators who can lay claim to victimhood in light of these imposing injunctions.

The phrase מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה "the lying down of a woman" (18:22) is sometimes cited by pro-gay promoters (Boswell, 1981:101) as an obscure depiction that has an air of uncertainty to it. But this phrase is subsequent to the preceding negative emphasis with מִשְׁכְּבֵי being closely related to the main verb שָׁכַב. Thus, the noun is substantively referring to the "place of lying" (Wold, 1998:106-107) which is a couch or bed, but the verbal idea is still resident in the noun reflecting "also what occurs on the bed, the act of lying or, more specifically, cohabitation." Wold (1998:106-107) adds that the nature of the Hebrew language "is often periphrastic"[81], assuming additional meaning, which in this instance is verbal. Similar phrasing מִשְׁכְּבֵי זָכָר is used in Judges 21:11-12 to describe "lying with a male" in relation to a young woman losing her virginity, which is anything but vague in its portrayal. A direct translation of the Hebrew אִשָּׁה מִשְׁכְּבֵי, according to Levine (1989:123), should read, "'after the manner of lying with a woman' by the introduction of the male member." Wold (1998:107) observes that when מִשְׁכְּבֵי is in syntactical relationship with either זָכָר or אִשָּׁה, it results in a circumlocution indicating sexual intercourse. Put another way, Gane (2004:321) makes the point that the language of Leviticus 18:22 "is devastatingly untechnical, leaving no room for ambiguity … the task here is to understand what the Bible says, not rewrite it."

3.2.4.3 Grammatical-syntactical observations in Leviticus 18:24-30

In support of the grammatical/syntactical explanations above, the final unit in Chapter 18 (vv. 24-30) issues a stern warning to Israel, detailing the divine judgments should they, as a nation, entertain disobedience of the preceding sexual proscriptions. Predicated on Yahweh's divine holiness, judgment is demanded when wickedness abounds (Ross, 2002:348). The message is that illicit sexual liaisons "defile" (טָמֵא) the land which ultimately belongs to God. Therefore, any breach of the sexual regulations will invite the cursing of God rather than the blessing obedience brings. God is holy and his land is to reflect that same holiness. This includes the Lord's people who are to exercise a holy stewardship over the land God gave them.

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[81] Further evidence of the periphrastic nature of biblical Hebrew is evidenced the many euphemisms used to describe the sex act and various male and female sex organs.

Throughout the corpus of 18:24-30 the root טָמֵא “to become clean” or “to defile” is utilized in various grammatical forms: the *Qal* is applied in 18:25 and 27, with *Piel* used in 18:28, while the *Niphal* is employed in 18:24, and in 18:24 and 30 finds the *Hithpael* demonstrated. The subject of *Qal* and *Niphal* forms focuses on the land, while the *Piel* and *Hithpael* modes emphasize the Israelites in the 2nd person plural (Kiuchi, 2007:338). The significance of this underscores that that every single instance listed in 18:6-23 is defiling (Kiuchi, 2007:338). This coincides with the plural usages of תּוֹעֵבָה in 18:26, 27, 29, and 30 which all circumscribe the vice list of 18:6-23. These indicate every single violation listed is repugnant to God, reviling his holy character while polluting his land.

In verse 25, the land is personified (Kiuchi, 2007:339) and graphically portrayed vomiting out the inhabitants. As Kiuchi (2007:339) explains the land God is giving the Hebrews is like a “sanctuary, a reflection of the spiritual state of its inhabitants”, which is where Yahweh’s presence is revealed. It is for this reason, flouting the stated sanctions results in their exile and forfeiture of their real estate as well as the *kareth* penalty of being “cut off” (18:29) from God.

This divine warning includes detailing that it only takes repeated violation of one of the described prohibitions to invoke such a curse. The use of the preposition מִן positioned after the verb עָשָׂה functions as a partitive (Kiuchi, 2007:339; Williams, 1992:56) in 18:26a, 29a, and 30. This has the pronounced effect of stressing that it is not required for Israel to violate all of the proscriptions in order to evoke God’s judgment. Indifference to even one of these directives in concert with the community’s judicial indifference to these breaches was enough to warrant divine disapproval.

That the Lord uses the soon-to-be expelled Canaanites as an illustration to Israel of what can happen, signals the universal scope of these prohibitions and the enduring moral opprobrium for all who tread across the sexual boundaries God has instituted. This emphasizes the moral nature of these laws above the ceremonial. As White and Niell (2002:81) conclude, no Egyptians, Assyrians, Moabites, or Ammonites were ever condemned for ceremonial violations, like missing Passover, however, they were culpable (18:3, 24, 25) for contravening universal moral laws. Hence, these regulations in 18:6-23 go beyond mere contraventions of ceremonial ritual. Because God is present with his people, he places tremendous value on sexual ethics, in stark contrast to the rest of the Ancient Near Eastern cultures (Hess, 2008:763).

3.2.4.4 Grammatical-syntactical observations in Leviticus 20:13

Now as Leviticus 20:13 is approached grammatically and syntactically, one immediately notices that the form of the chapter is different than Chapter 18, even though Chapter 20 mirrors 18 in many ways, covering the same basic territory. What is striking is that Leviticus 20 is casuistic in style rather than manifesting the apodictic traits of Chapter 18. This means the accent falls more on the nature and severity of the penalty than the infraction itself, which stresses the magnitude of the sin. Contextually, 20:2-8 focuses on the nature and seriousness of false worship, underscoring the need for sacral holiness (20:7-8) before bridging to the section (20:9-21) detailing moral degeneracy within the family unit. The context reveals a distinct juxtaposition connecting false worship with the moral failure within the family unit. Thus, the blending of pagan worship and pagan morals in everyday life was inescapable. Ross (2002:371, 374) agrees, noting the "direct cause and effect" association "between false religion and corrupt practice", directly linking a low moral order to false forms of worship.

It is within this environment that the parallel verse to 18:22 is found (20:13):

Leviticus 20:13 "If *there is* a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

It is first observed that the verse falls within the immediate context of other similar laws all addressing the family. Leviticus is surrounded by laws of incest and adultery, all closely related analogues. A convincing argument can be made viewing 20:11ff. as 'variants' or 'subheadings of adultery (Burnside, 2006:395-396). Because 20:13 is case law, its form is somewhat different than 18:22. The opening protasis of this conditional sentence (potential sex act) is comprised of a subordinate clause "If there is a man who lies with a male". But the main clause is found in the apodosis "they shall surely be put to death". This emphasizes the consequence and capital nature of this particular sin. Much of the wording in the protasis is identical to 18:22 with the noun זָכָר appearing following the verb שָׁכַב this time, but still maintaining its gender inclusive nature (Wold, 1998:103). The verb שָׁכַב retains its original meaning from 18:22 with an emphasis on an illicit sex act that was consensual. That both parties are punished with equal severity strongly indicates the nature of the activity was consensual. Because both individuals are said to have "bloodguiltiness" implies not only mutual consent, but mutual premeditation whereby both committed a deliberate act with full knowledge of the consequences.

The gravity of the sin is affirmed (Bailey, 2005:241; Kaiser, 1994:1142) by the eight-fold repetition of מוֹת יוּמָת "They shall surely be put to death"[82] which occurs in its various forms in 20:2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16. It is this מוֹת יוּמָת construct that connects (Rooker, 2000:265) false worship (20:2) with sexual immorality (20:9-21) highlighting the relationship between idolatrous worship and pansexuality in day-to-day life.

In all, Leviticus 20 specifies three various penalties for the proscriptions listed: 1. Execution by various means was the most extreme sentence imposed for the most egregious violations; 2. Other offenses like those found in 20:17-18 — a man marrying his sister, probably half-sister, and intentionally laying with a menstruous woman incurred the *kareth* penalty; and 3. Barrenness was imposed (20:20, 21).

There is much common ground between Chapter 18 and 20 (Mathews, 2009:155). Both chapters deal with similar sins, albeit from a somewhat different angle — Chapter 18 is written more directly in apodictic style as a stern warning collectively and individually, while Chapter 20 follows the casuistic format. Leviticus 18 stresses the activity of the prohibition, while Chapter 20 insists on the penalty and magnitude of the sentence accentuating the atrocity of the violation. What connects the two chapters together is that they are both looking at the same situation from somewhat different vantage points. This serves to emphatically heighten the force and direct manner of these sexual stipulations. So, rather than being redundant, these two similar chapters reinforce what is a vital message to ancient Israel concerning their covenant relationship with the LORD and their survival in the land he gave them. One of the overriding commonalities of these two chapters is the assumed nexus (Levine, 1989:135) between false worship and sexual degeneracy, with both resulting in the nation's exile. At the end of Chapter 20 (20:22-26), it ends as it began (18:2-5) with a call for holy conduct that reflects the nature of a holy God.

Both Leviticus 18 and 20 are about apostasy (spiritual apostasy and sexual apostasy) and the overlapping influence between the two. Both chapters warn a nation in formation about the perils of departing from God's creation ideal for human sexuality (Gane, 2004:323) which is comprised of the following creation order elements: (1) permanence; (2) monogamy, or an

[82] In Old Testament law there were three types of penalty (Wenham, 1979:285-286) that accompanied the various statutes: (1) the death penalty was of course the maximum penalty for capital crimes; (2) the *kareth* penalty was a unique form of punishment that is cause for much debate regarding some ambiguities associated with it, but Wenham explains that it applied primarily in religious and sexual violations. He contends that in light of the capital nature of many of these offenses, "cutting off" was the threat of direct punishment by God that entertained the spectre of premature death; (3) Wenham (1979:279) does believe that the death penalty was the maximum, not the minimum sentence imposed, implying that when tried by a human court, a different sentence could be applied. Kaiser (1994:1142) indicates similarly, saying it was possible for the guilty party to have the sentence of death commuted by a recognized judge. The exception to this, Kaiser notes, is first degree murder.

exclusive “one flesh” union; (3) gender distinction; and (4) it must be between human beings — species specific. Both Leviticus 18 and 20 are meant as a preventative to pre-emptively and proactively warn Israel not to stray from God’s original design for marriage and sexuality, for their status as a distinct and blessed nation depended on it.

Now with the preceding lexical and grammatical implications of the text surveyed, it is necessary to compare Scripture with Scripture. Using analogy of the faith, the interpreter can trace the progression of the topic at hand to determine whether or not there is any discernible pattern of consistency regarding the matter of human sexuality with special reference to homosexuality as understood today. This will help determine if there is a universal moral principle that undergirds the Old Testament.

3.2.5 The grammatical-historical use of *analogia fidei*

Once one moves away from the Levitical texts under consideration (Lv 18:22; 20:13), are there any other general textual clues from the rest of Scripture that support the thesis being developed, proscribed homosexuality? While it is impossible to extensively entertain this topic in total in this present treatment. It is for this reason only the primary Old Testament passages will be surveyed. Given the Pentateuchal context of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, contextual analogies to Genesis 1-2; Genesis 19 and Judges 19-20; Deuteronomy 23:17-18 and 22:5 will all be discussed before turning to Ezekiel 16:48-51 and 18:3-11.

3.2.5.1 Comparing the Genesis creation account to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

The most discussed intertextual connection related to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 among grammatical-historical interpreters, is the association these texts have with creation in Genesis 1-2. It is the creation story where all the creatures that were made — whether land, sea, or sky creatures — were made “according to its kind” (Gn 1:11-16, 21, 24, 25) and would, therefore, produce according to its kind. Of this, Gagnon (2001:136) compares the sexual laws of Leviticus 18:6-23 and 20:9-21 to the sexual blueprint in creation order (Dickson, 2002:366; Dunnam, 2003:104-114). The connection between Leviticus 18 and 20 with the creation account, Gagnon (2005c:386) insists, is ideational, not merely for illustrative purposes (Kiuchi, 2007:29-30, 333). Although Genesis 1-2 is descriptive, not prescriptive, literature, it is nevertheless a precedent-setting paradigm (Radner, 2008:190) with assumed authority throughout the remainder of the Bible (Mt 19:4-6; Mk 10:2-12; Eph 5:22-32).

The sexual proscriptions of Leviticus 18 and 20 find impetus from Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:24 as creation explicitly insinuates gender distinction and differentiation between the “male and

female" in concert with creation order[83] (Davidson, 2007:157). It is here that sexual boundaries are confirmed, evidenced in the first heterosexual couple celebrating both their discomplementarity and complementarity as "one flesh" (לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד), which Kiuchi (2007:334) says "means they become part of each other, the symbolic picture seen in sexual intercourse." Transgressing this created order amounts to the "mixing of two things that were never intended to be mixed"[84] (Gagnon, 2001:135-142). The completion of Adam required a woman, which was by divine design. Therefore, the uniformity of same-sex relations is an obvious departure from creation norms, even subsequent to the fall (Gn 3). All sexual deviations from this divine pattern are deemed "rebellion that violates creation order". Homosexuality affirms "that one gender by itself is an adequate representation of the divine" (DeYoung, 2000:15), which leads to a radical "redefinition" of creation.[85] In a post-Genesis 3 world, it is important to remember that sin distorts and leads to estrangement leading to wholesale revisionism of original creation (Turner, 1997:440).

That Scripture consistently upholds the creation standards for gender distinction[86] and heterosexual sexuality within a covenant relationship, is manifested in the New Covenant standards for marriage and sexuality. When Jesus and Paul referenced marriage and sexuality they both, without qualification or equivocation, extol the "pre-fall paradigm … the monogamous union of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 as the norm of human sexuality and marriage … This is the norm God intended all along to be a greater shadow of a greater reality — a parable of another marriage, Christ's marriage to the Church (Eph 5:31-32). Thus, marriage and sex are not defined by culture, but by the gospel itself," (Burk, 2010:224). And this norm and definition reach all the way back to the paradigmatic cornerstone of Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:18-24

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[83] Because the man and the woman are created in the "image" and "likeness" of God, Adam and Eve are the pinnacle of God's creation. DeYoung (2000:14-15) explains: "to a degree we understand what God is like by understanding what people are like."

[84] In his insightful commentary on discordant sexual pairings, Ukleja (1983:259) poignantly observes: "Fornication fails to honor the image of God in the other person, for it only sees the other as a commodity. Adultery violates the shrine of marital fidelity which houses and keeps sacred the sexual expression. Incest is an effort to achieve union with an image too close to oneself … Bestiality is the effort to achieve union with an image too different from oneself … homosexuality is a confusion, since it involves the effort of achieving union with a 'mirror' image of oneself. This 'other' is not sufficiently different."

[85] Bailey (2005:255) describes the same-sex violation of created order this way, "the legitimization of homosexuality requires an entirely different kind of creation story." While Davidson (2007:157) concludes that departure from creation order "is the only reasonable explanation that encompasses all sexual proscriptions of Leviticus 18."

[86] In two books chronicling his concerns of the evangelical feminist movement, Grudem (2004:102-130, 513-516; 2006:35-42, 237-249) details the obvious links between the diminishment of the creation account and gender distortion with its ultimate terminus leading to the acceptance and promotion of homosexuality. Most churches and denominations that have embraced homosexuality, first engaged in blurring gender distinctions and scripturally defined roles.

establishing God's will (Seitz, 2000:191) for gender and sexuality. For this reason, how one views sexuality is attributable to one's larger view of creation itself (Nyarenchi, 2004:104).

3.2.5.2 Comparing Genesis 19:1-11 to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

In a neighbouring context to the creation account, Genesis 19 and the incident of Sodom and Gomorrah further illustrate the sexual apostasy of the Canaanites. The crux of the debate in Genesis 19 is over the meaning of the Hebrew verb יָדַע (to know) found in 19:5 and 8. Some pro-gay interpreters claim the verb יָדַע refers to a breach in hospitality in 19:5, yet they see a sexual meaning in 19:8 when Lot offers to send out his two virgin daughters for the sodomites' gratification. The argument being that of 943 uses in the Old Testament for יָדַע, in only about 11 instances does it refer to sexual intercourse (Boswell, 1981:94). But as many grammatical-historical interpreters contend (DeYoung, 2000:33-35; Ukleja, 1983:261-262), it is the direct and immediate context that determines the meaning of the verb, not the frequency. The word יָדַע has a wide range of meaning that should not be limited by the use of statistical analysis (Ukleja, 1983:261). Given the near proximity of the two verbs (19:5 and 8), it is very unlikely that the word would be given two completely different meanings when situated so closely together (Kidner, 1967:136-137), unless the context makes it quite evident that a different meaning is required.

A parallel passage is found in Judges 19:22 and 25 where יָדַע is used in close succession, and the meaning is plainly referring to rape. The New Testament in 2 Peter 2:6-7 and Jude 7 grant further credence to the sexual nature of the sin committed in Genesis 19:1-11. Jude 7 declares explicitly that Sodom and Gomorrah were guilty of "gross immorality" (ἐκπορνεύω) — an intensified form of immorality that would have included a wide range of sexual vices to include prostitution and even same-sex desires (Louw & Nida, 1996:770). Furthermore, Jude states they went after "strange flesh" (σάρκος ἕτερος) or flesh of a different kind. This may indicate bestiality as well as homosexual desires.

It is notable that the Septuagint translates יָדַע in Genesis 19:5 συγγενώμεθα "to have sex" (cf. Gn 39:10), so the Septuagint translators certainly believed the men of Sodom were intent on homosexual rape and guilty of more than a contravention of hospitality standards. In fact, nowhere in the Old Testament does יָדַע ever mean "inhospitality" (DeYoung, 2000:34).

In his depiction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jesus never cites the express reason(s) why they were destroyed (Lk 10:10-12; Mt 10:14-15). Rather he uses them as a model of God's judgment and destruction illustrating that their ultimate sin is attributable to their failure to believe the truth about God (Nyarenchi, 2004:112). This all serves as an example of rejecting Jesus. The

message of Genesis 19:1-11 is that they (Sodom and Gomorrah) entertained a broad-spectrum of sins and wickedness which finally expressed itself in homosexual rape. It is their homosexual desires that evidence the dank depths of their depravity (Gn 13:13) and "the extent of their perversion" (Turner, 1997:436). Given the prevailing posture of the Ancient Near East regarding homosexuality and male cult prostitution, it is not really surprising that the men — all ages — of Sodom demanded to have intercourse with the two angels of the Lord[87]. Homosexuality, Wenham (1991:361) explains, "adds a special piquancy to their crime." The sin of Genesis 19:1-11 was more than a dishonouring of another's status (Stiebert & Walsh, 2001:131). Instead, this was a direct result of consuming lusts and an irrational eroticism (Dickson, 2002:357), which would have driven them to the extreme of same-sex rape. So, while homosexuality is not all these ancients were guilty of, it serves as a signature for a host of other distortions. Many of these were sexual in nature.

3.2.5.3 Comparing Judges 19-20 to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

The situation in Judges 19-20 has a close correspondence to Genesis 19:1-11 and the Sodom incident. The distinction in the Judge's account is that the same sin that gripped Sodom has now paralyzed the tribe of Benjamin and is a window into the fulfilment of Leviticus 18:24-30. Failure to adhere to the Levitical proscription and pursue a rigorous holiness with God has now produced moral indifference and a mind-set that pursues sexual licence in Israel. If the men of Gibeah only want to get to know the Levite in a hospitable manner, why do they rape his concubine? If, as Walsh and Stiebert maintain, the Gibeonites wanted to dishonour the status of the Levite, is not raping his concubine and leaving her bereft of life another form of extreme dishonour? Just like the men of Sodom, the men of Gibeah were fuelled by a pronounced eroticism (Dickson, 2002:359), which led them to do "what was right in their own eyes", gratifying their own desires in the process.

A key difference between Sodom and the Benjamites was that Benjamin was in a covenant relationship with Yahweh. Unlike the Sodomites before them, the men of Benjamin should have known better. Judges 19:23 describes the sordid events of that day as נְבָלָה "folly". Nyarenchi (2004:128) describes the folly of perpetrators: they were insensitive to the claims of both God and man. At its core, there was a recalcitrance to acknowledge any moral or spiritual claims upon them. They were inured to the covenantal claims upon them. Ultimately correction came

[87] Both Wenham (1991:361) and Taylor (1995:4) mention the sinful parallels between Genesis 6:1-4 and 19:1-11. In both texts there was a perversion of sexual relations with both communities being completely destroyed because of the extent of their wickedness. In both instances only one family escaped the judgment. The creation order paradigm for marriage and sexuality is in view.

not from any within Benjamin, but the other tribes outside of theirs. Their "sexual irregularity" placed them on the road to "social and political disintegration" (Niditch, 1982:374).

3.2.5.4 Comparing Deuteronomy 23:17-18 to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

Staying in the Pentateuchal context, Deuteronomy 23:17-18[H18-19] casts further aspersion on what was probably related to the Ancient Near Eastern cult functionaries i.e., cult prostitutes[88], both female and male (Davidson, 2007:159-161; Gagnon, 2005c:374; Oswalt, 1979:64-66; Wenham, 1991:362). The context of Deuteronomy 23:17-18[H18-19] is a warning to Israel not to engage in shrine prostitution (23:17[18]) or prostitution in general (23:18[19]) and then to use the proceeds earned from such activity to pay vows to the tabernacle/temple.

The basic beliefs at the heart of these fertility rites concerned increased productivity in both field and family, greater community prosperity, and the increased propagation of human life (Nyarenchi, 2004:90). It is, in large measure, to this end that these sacral prostitutes plied their trade and offered their cultic services. This would have had a morally numbing effect on society at large, producing a sexually amoral culture where boundaries were blurred if not non-existent. Hence, the stern warning issued to ancient Israel.

These קְדֵשָׁה (female prostitutes) and קָדֵשׁ (male prostitutes)[89] are thought to have practiced ritual sex in the same fashion as other Ancient Near Eastern Mesopotamian cultures where the *assinnus*, *kurgurrus*, and *kulu'u* were frequently castrated and transformed their masculinity into femininity for the purposes of homosexual practices (Davidson, 2007:159; Gagnon, 2005c:374; Wenham, 1991:362). As feminized males, who surrendered their heterosexual capacities, the קָדֵשׁ served the goddess to whom they were dedicated by offering their bodies to other men. Oswalt (1979:64) is convinced that קָדֵשׁ and קְדֵשָׁה are really used as a "technical term for dedicated ones"[90]. As dedicated ones, the קָדֵשׁ offered their sexuality as a sacred service to be used by the god/goddess they served, for cultic purposes. This is strongly condemned by the

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[88] There was an overall general contempt for prostitution in ancient Israel because it was viewed as contrary to covenant law and the behaviour (Lv 19:29; 21:9; Dt 22:21) that flowed from this law (Merrill, 1994:313). These practices were even more reprehensible if they occurred in a religious context.

[89] The two Hebrew terms are closely related to the idea of holiness and both gendered cult functionaries were thought to be "holy ones".

[90] At this point, the pro-gay advocate may argue that homosexuality as it is known and practiced today is not for religious purposes, in which case the application of this text is null and void. In response to this, Oswalt explains (1979:65) the close association between the pagan worldview and homosexual practice proposing that the pagan worldview had/has no boundaries which give rise to homosexual practice. Jones (2006:67-84) in his book *The God of sex* goes into some detail about the religious implications of modern day homosexuality, devoting a whole chapter to *"Homosexuality: The sexual sacrament of religious paganism"*. As for the argument that cultic homosexuality was contrary to the nature of these fertility rites, Oswalt (1979:66) counters that as long as the ritual was performed properly the deities' power(s) could still be manipulated, "so it didn't matter if the homosexual activity wasn't conducive to fertility".

Lord as תּוֹעֵבָה (23:18[19]) and the male prostitutes are depicted as “dogs” (כֶּלֶב). This is a description used in Mesopotamia texts (Wenham, 1991:362) identifying the repugnancy of these gynandrous priests — it should be noted that only the males are referred to as “dogs”, which was meant to be as derogatory as it was defamatory.

In later narrative accounts (1 Ki 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; 2 Ki 23:7; Job 36:13-14) the קָדֵשׁ were a fixture in an apostate Israel, and Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, executed the remaining cult prostitutes in the land (2 Ki 23:7). The passage in 1 Kings 14:24 no doubt serves as an intertextual link to Leviticus 18:24-30: “There were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to the **abominations** of the nations which the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.” Israel had failed to abide by the sexual proscriptions outlined in the Levitical texts and stood under the indictment of God as a result. In obedience to the LORD and his law, Judean kings like Asa and Jehoshaphat began to rid the nation of this blight. In so doing they were seeking to restore a measure of creation-order sexuality, and so distinguish themselves from the Canaanites in the process, who had clearly influenced the Hebrews. In this, there is a conscious reflection on the gravity of the Levitical prohibitions and the Deuteronomic warnings.

3.2.5.5 Comparing Deuteronomy 22:5 to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

In near proximity to the proscription in Deuteronomy 23:17-18, is a prohibition related to transvestism in 22:5. This prohibition is referring to something more than a man wearing woman’s fashion (Craigie, 1976:287; McConville, 2002:337) as evidenced by the strength of the warning in the last clause “for whoever does these things is an abomination [תּוֹעֵבָה] to the LORD your God.” What things are referenced here? The first part of the verse details the nature of the prohibition: “A woman shall not wear man’s clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman’s clothing”. The first clause, according to Craigie (1976:289), does not specifically mean male clothing, but rather the “things that pertain to the male” or being male to include weapons, ornaments, or anything commonly associated with being a man. In contrast, the second clause is explicitly legislating against a man wearing female attire. There is a creational distinction to attain and uphold, and the blurring of such distinction is a repugnance to the LORD.

In comparison with the Ancient Near Eastern background related to homosexuality, Mesopotamian male cult functionaries strove to gender-blend and emasculate their masculinity into indistinction. While it is not certain, it appears that this passage is indirectly related to cultic forms of same-sex contact in connection with male cult prostitutes (Craigie, 1976:287-288; Davidson, 2007:170-171; McConville, 2002:337; Merrill, 1994:295-296; Thompson, 1974:234). There is an overt tendency for transvestism to promote some forms of homosexuality. At its core, this legislation is meant to warn against "obliterating all sexual distinctions, which often lead to licentiousness and promotes unnaturalness opposed to God's created order" (Davidson, 2007:171; Kaiser, 1991:198). This would equate to the modern day transgenderism that is being so aggressively promoted in the post-Christian west.

In relationship to this distortion of creation order, Davidson (2007:171) supports the rationale maintaining that this obscuring notion is upheld by the literary structure in the unit where Deuteronomy 22:5 is couched. There is a unique chiastic structure found in 22:5-12, which unfolds at a point in Deuteronomy that occurs in the interstices between the sixth and seventh commandments. The regulation falls in the immediate context of various forbidden mixtures which are morally and culturally abhorrent to God. In reference to gender obfuscation (Davidson, 2007:171-174) it distorts creation order and promotes licentiousness. It, therefore, is תּוֹעֵבָה or detestable to the Lord.

3.2.5.6 Comparing Ezekiel to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

The final analogue to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is Ezekiel 16:49-51 and 18:10-13. Both Ezekiel units deal with the context of contrast between a captive Jerusalem and Sodom. The obvious context features the extreme privilege Jerusalem enjoyed as one who experienced an exclusive covenant relationship with Yahweh. Based on this covenant privilege, Israel was held to the higher covenantal standard than other nations. Correspondingly this meant greater culpability (DeYoung, 1987:16) when by disobedience, Jerusalem violated the terms of the covenant relationship. With this in mind, Ezekiel compares the sin(s) of Israel with those of Sodom. If Gagnon (2005c:373) is correct, then there are a number of linguistic and thematic "echoes" between the two Ezekiel units and the Holiness Code in Leviticus. Gagnon (2005c:373) argues that Ezekiel interprets the Sodom narrative through the grid of Leviticus 18:22.

It is Gagnon's (2005c:372-373) contention that the Ezekiel 16:50 use of תּוֹעֵבָה should be translated "abomination", not as a collective singular "abominations", as it is in 18:12, where it is translated in the singular. Gagnon sees a definite parallel between the singular use of "abomination" in Leviticus 18:22 and the plural uses of the same in Leviticus 18:26, 27, 29, 30. He observes the same structure in Ezekiel 16:50 and 51 and then again in 18:12 and 13, where

both passages use the singular form of תּוֹעֵבָה to precede (16:50; 18:12) the plural (16:51; 18:13), yet with the notable distinction that 16:50 uses the collective singular form.

In Gagnon's proposal, the singular use of תּוֹעֵבָה in 16:50 and 18:12 is interpreted as metonymy for homosexuality, based on Leviticus 18:22, making the singular "abomination" synonymous with the homosexuality attributed to Sodom and Gomorrah. This would then make the plural usage of תּוֹעֵבָה in Ezekiel 16:51 a circumscription summary for the five individual sins mentioned in 16:49 and 50, to include the metonymic use of תּוֹעֵבָה in 16:50. Gagnon would maintain the same form in 18:12-13, which adds strength to his scheme.

Finding agreement with Gagnon, Davidson (2007:162-166) supports the Gagnon proposal by drawing attention to the use of זִמָּה in Ezekiel 16:43 "You have committed lewdness" which should be defined as "wickedness" or "depravity" that indicates premeditated sins of a sexual nature. Add the slurry of sexual metaphors used to describe Jerusalem's sin — "harlot", "adulteries", and "harlotries" in context with "abominations" likely includes, among other violations, Judah's sexual falsification. In conjunction with other singular uses of תּוֹעֵבָה in Ezekiel, like 22:11 and 33:26, one can deduce it more than plausible that Ezekiel is relying directly on Leviticus 18:22 to describe the class of sexual sins that produced an exiled Jerusalem. That Ezekiel follows the same singular/plural תּוֹעֵבָה interchange as Leviticus 18:22 and 18:26, 27, 29, 30 is a significant probability. One should be careful about being too dogmatic on this point, but the possibility that Gagnon is right, is promising.[91]

3.3 Summary of the grammatical-historical method

One of the most pronounced differences between pro-gay interpreters and grammatical-historical interpreters is found in the emphasis grammatical-historical interpreters (DeYoung, 2000:29; White & Niell, 2002:15) place on biblical authority. The grammatical-historical methodology views the Bible as a uniquely God-breathed word rather than a mere human creation of little relevance for modern life. It is this distinguishing conviction in a divinely inspired book that finds grammatical-historical interpreters asserting a unified hermeneutical quest to uncover the original author's intention before pragmatically seeking to apply a passage for today. Equipped with this necessary first cause of biblical authority, grammatical-historical interpreters then promote the features of a literal method of interpretation — an interpretation that endeavours to unearth the meaning of the text the original author intended at the time of writing.

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[91] Ezekiel's use of and knowledge of Leviticus is attested by works like that of Sprinkle (2007:275-293) who examines Ezekiel's use of Leviticus 18:5. Sprinkle's thesis is that Ezekiel's usage of Leviticus 18:5 reveals that Israel has not lived up to her covenant responsibility, which now explains the exilic distress Ezekiel details.

In keeping with the grammatical-historical method, the wider Pentateuchal context of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 was examined to establish the overall framework in which these verses are found. These Levitical passages are embedded within a legal-covenantal structure that is aimed at fostering a relationship (Averbeck, 1995:116) in the suzerain-vassal construct. The laws that flow from this framework are meant to be instructional, personal, community orientated, and precedent setting in the national life of Israel (see 3.2.1.3), as opposed to being an exhaustive legal code (Ellis, 2002:251). The overarching summation of the purpose and intent of the Mosaic law is embodied in nurturing a preeminent love for God (Dt 6:5) and a corresponding horizontal love for one's neighbour (Lv 19:18). The goal of these laws was meant to teach Israel how to live holy lives in the presence of a holy God (Klein *et al.,* 2004:345).

The milieu of the Pentateuchal law assumes the depth of human depravity and the detrimental impact this depravity has had on the divine-human relationship (see 3.2.1.5.1). Therefore, the covenantal law addresses the fundamental question of how the Hebrews should live before God and each other, based on the holy Suzerain's presence. The Levitical context further develops the theme of holiness within a defined legal setting (Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26) specifying the practical ramifications of sanctified living that reflect redemption (Ex 19:5-6). Both Leviticus 18 and 20 anchor human sexual conduct to the ground of holiness, evidencing that these abuses of creation order defy the very nature of God himself.

The general context of Leviticus 18 and 20 reveals that both chapters correspond like two sides of the same coin with Chapter 18 stressing the nature of kinship ties as a reason for sexual fidelity — all within a suzerain-vassal treaty format. In comparison, Chapter 20 accentuates the severity of various sexual transgression by issuing strict penalties for these violations — penalties that affirm the seriousness of the crime.

In contrast to the biblical sexual proscriptions, the Ancient Near Eastern societies had various degrees of promiscuity etched upon their culture. These ancient analogues mention little of sexuality in their ancient legal codes, although, omen and mythic literature depicted licentious acts of cohabitation between the gods and goddesses. This, in part, defined these surrounding societies who lacked the sexual boundaries of the Israelites (Mathews, 2009:156). In stark contrast, the Mosaic legal code was distinctly explicit and extensive in its condemnation of the numerous sexual contraventions, which involve all forms of male homosexuality including male-cult prostitution (3.2.2.4).

By narrowing the focus of the grammatical-historical method, the lexical aspects of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are seen to have much in common: using the same wording that proscribes all variations of male-male activity for all males of all ages and times. The Levitical pronouncement of this illicit behaviour is that it is detestable from God's perspective.

The lexical term תּוֹעֵבָה adopts a unique contextual meaning in Leviticus as it is applied in its singular usage in both 18:22 and 20:13 with four plural usages in 18:24-30, where it is applied to all the sexual vices of 18:6-23. The use of this particular noun in the context signals God's extreme hatred and abhorrence for sexual combinations that deviate from the creational intention (Gn 1:27; 2:23-24) for the sexual relationship. All of these demonstrate a special emphasis on the repugnance of male homosexual behaviour. The term תּוֹעֵבָה indicates that homosexual conduct is antithetical to the person and nature of Yahweh and his original purpose of human sexuality at creation (Grisanti, 1997:315). This denotes that תּוֹעֵבָה is more than a ritual boundary term. Instead, it has a strong moral and ethical import. It is, therefore, "tenuous to label all uses of [תּוֹעֵבָה] as arbitrary, or having no permanent connection with human good" (Turner, 1997:437).

Further hermeneutical investigation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 yields grammatical and syntactical constructs that are written with wording and phrasing which underlines the emphatic negation of all male-male homosexuality. The syntax of 18:22 is a specific expansion of what 18:3 prohibits. Here God explicitly declares that Israel is not to imitate the Egyptians or the Canaanites in the matters detailed in 18:6-23. To do so constituted a deliberate choice to violate God's clear command and as such would invite Israel's expulsion from the land of promise. Based on the word order, 18:22 is an emphatic negative assessment of all male-male coupling. It categorically denounces all forms of same-sex intercourse regardless of age, class, or status (cf. 3.2.4.1).

The grammar and syntax of 20:13 focuses more on the severity of the penalty attached to the violation. Because the homosexuality was considered a capital crime (Kaiser, 1994:1142; Willis, 2009:175), like adultery, it is a significant indication of the gravity of God's assessment of such. The syntactical and lexical nature of 20:13 reveals that both parties were fully cognizant of the sobering consequence of such a violation. All of this excludes the idea that this kind of relationship is permitted so long as it is consensual and loving.

As Scripture is compared to Scripture, the divine negative pronouncement on homosexuality is unvarying and unrelenting. There is a Scriptural consistency as the Bible always portrays homosexual acts in a very negative light, because homosexuality — like adultery, incest, and

bestiality — is always wrong for all people of all eras. Any sexual amendments to what God ordained from creation are unwelcome departures that express humanity's rebellion and apostasy in both the spiritual and moral realm. Through obediently honouring God's sexual code of conduct Israel further fulfilled their covenant mandate to love God (Dt 6:5), and to love their neighbour, all with the result that they would serve as a light to the nations (Ex 19:5-6).

In light of the grammatical-historical interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, homosexuality has always been unacceptable to God because it violates the creative order, design, intention, and function of the Creator. Homosexuality of every variety is, therefore, always be unacceptable to God's people.

4 RELATING OLD TESTAMENT MEANING TO A NEW TESTAMENT CONTEXT: HERMENEUTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERPRETING OLD TESTAMENT SEXUAL PROSCRIPTIONS IN LIGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is hardly an understatement to say that one of the most hotly debated biblical hermeneutical issues concerns the relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament. The question of how the modern-day interpreter applies the Torah in the New Testament context has a variety of offered solutions that seek to solve the riddle of the degree of continuity versus discontinuity between the two testaments, as books like *Continuity and discontinuity*[1] testify. In recognition of this, Averbeck (1995:125) reminds his readers that the core issue at stake is "how" the Mosaic regulation from the Pentateuch applies to the New Testament and beyond, not that it does not apply. While the task may be complex[2], there is a very real need to bring the two testaments together so that the interpreter may know what the Levitical sexual proscriptions mean today (Seitz, 2000:180). This necessitates interpreting the law based on an informed understanding of the nature and purpose of the law (Ross, 2002:59). From this, a more accurate application can be sought for a culture saturated in all things sexual.

More specific to this study, what is the particular relationship between the sexual prohibitions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 and the New Covenant setting of the New Testament? Can these clear commands issued some 3400 years ago even be applied in the 21st-century postmodern[3] culture? If so, how should they be applied? To what degree should they be applied? After all, Mount Sinai is as chronologically remote from the progressive attitudes that epitomize the present age as the culture of Ancient Near East. But does this in itself preclude a modern day application of the texts in question?

With this in mind, it is the purpose of this chapter to advance the meaning discovered in Chapter 3 from the texts in question (Lv 18:22; 20:13) seeking to harmonize that meaning in a New Testament context before venturing to make specific application for the current cultural context.

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[1] This work, edited by John Feinberg, helpfully explores the varieties of ways various conservative evangelicals within the Reformed tradition seek to harmonize the degree of continuity between the two testaments. The issue is as complex as it is disputed and debated.

[2] Goldingay (1990:41) explains the difficulty of the undertaking in relating the OT to the NT. To this end, he cautions the interpreter to exercise an equal measure of "sensitivity" and "critical discipline", so that the two may be rightly brought into relation with each other.

[3] See Malony (2003:122-134) for an analysis of the connection between postmodernism and the cultural afformation of homosexuality.

This will be attempted by (1) considering the pre-Sinaitic context of the Mosaic law; (2) analysing the various elements of the law; (3) reviewing the purpose of the law; (4) endeavouring to relate the Old Testament law to a New Testament context that explores the use of the law by both Jesus and Paul; and (5) by discussing the hermeneutical methodology using Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 as an example of how this procedure should be applied.

Before proceeding further, the following serves as an example of the difficulties encountered when using passages like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 in a culture and age that basically welcomes homosexuality: A common response from pro-gay advocates to literal uses of the Old Testament is well illustrated by an anonymous letter written to the USA radio talk-show host, Dr Laura, who is known to have publicly stated to callers that homosexuality is a "biological mistake"[4]. This anonymous response surfaced on the internet and has been used ever since by many pro-gay promoters to counter Christian uses of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13:

"Dear Dr. Laura,
Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind him that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate.
I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific laws and how to best follow them.
a) When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing for the Lord (Lev 1:9). The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?
b) I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?
c) I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanliness (Lev 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.
d) Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?
e) I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?

[4] The following WIKIPEDIA link details more about Dr Laura, who is religiously Jewish, and her blunt assertions about homosexuality that prompted a campaign against her show from the LGBT community: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Schlessinger.

f) A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?
g) Lev 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?
h) Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev 19:27. How should they die?
i) I know from Lev 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?
j) My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? (Lev 24:10-16) Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)
I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help.
Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging.
Your devoted disciple and adoring fan."[5]

A response like this presents unique difficulties for well-meaning Christians who dare to oppose the same-sex status quo with Old Testament Scripture. How does one respond to a mockingly creative reply like the one forwarded to Dr Laura? Is homosexuality still a capital offense? If so, why isn't it applied by the church today? If it is not a capital offense, why isn't it? Should Christians even use the Old Testament when responding to pro-gay claims? If so, how should it be used and harmonized with the New Testament imperatives regarding its condemnation of homosexuality? Furthermore, does the New Testament even address the subject? Doesn't the New Testament take a more antinomian view of homosexuality? Wasn't Jesus silent on the matter? If so, was his silence a tacit endorsement of pro-gay approval?

Ridiculing queries, like the one above, can only be addressed adequately as the place of the Old Testament law in the New Testament is satisfactorily developed. Once the interrelationship between the two testaments is determined, one can then discern the meaning of texts like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 in the post-Old Testament world. Yet, before offering a present day

[5] The letter addressed to Dr Laura is of an unknown origin, according to the internet fact-checking site Snopes. It has many variations and adaptations, but is used often to counter biblical claims against homosexuality. It is quite common to find this kind of argumentation when advancing biblical arguments related to permissive attitudes surrounding the same-sex subject. The letter can be accessed here: http://www.snopes.com/politics/religion/drlaura.asp .

application of 18:22 and 20:13, the interpreter needs to return to the protology of the creation account to determine if there is a basis to establish a trans-historical and trans-cultural paradigm for sexuality.

4.1 The creational context of the Patriarchal law is foundational for defining boundaries between the two Testaments

A precursor for trying to understand the New Testament uses of Sinaitic law is to acknowledge that the concept of law and regulation does not begin in Exodus 19:1-8. Rather, Exodus 19 is a particular expression and specific application of a pre-existing (Fretheim, 1991:363), pre-Sinaitic law established from the time of creation (Walton, 1994:158). The context of Genesis 1 through Exodus 18 is not devoid of law. Instead, these proto-Sinai narratives detail universal laws embedded in a "context of creation" (Bruckner, 1995:91) to include both pre- and post-fall narrative.

As Fretheim (1991:363) explains, "original creation is not without law (Gn 1:26-28; 2:14-16; 9:1-6; 18:19, 25 and 26:5)." Because Yahweh is the creator, there is a resident universal (Greidanus, 1985:40)[6] element to the law that extends beyond the national elements imposed upon Israel. For this reason, the creation setting transcends the covenant and stipulations later issued to Israel (Bruckner, 1995:96), implying that there is a universal applicability of creation conditioned laws for all people in all ages (Fretheim, 1991:363). The features of creation law are as follows:

4.1.1 The creation ordinance is couched in creation order

Building on M.G. Kline's work *The Structure of Biblical Authority,* Merrill (1987:298) contends that Genesis 1:26-28 is a "greatly abbreviated" Suzerain-Vassal Covenant, but humanity's ability to obey the dictates of this universal covenant was severely truncated at the fall (Merrill, 1987:302). As a result, redemption by grace is, in some measure, a return to creation (Fretheim, 1991:356, 359; House, 1992:3-4; Merrill, 1987:304). Although there are some features of this covenantal proposal that are intriguing, it still remains questionable.

This writer prefers to view the creation ordinances for gender distinction, monogamy, and human sexuality predicated on the merits of the creation account's own historical veracity. Additionally, Genesis 1:31 declares that all God made was emphatically pronounced to be "very

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[6] Greidanus (1985:43) posits that God's creation covenant with humanity in Genesis 1:26-28 essentially and universally regulates image bearers in their relationships between God and people; interrelationships between humanity are also universally mandated (Greidanus, 1985:45) as laws like murder are addressed (Gn 4:1-15; 9:5-6); the final dimension of universal law Greidanus (1985:46-47) espouses identifies the limits placed on sexual congress (Gn 1:27; 2:23, 24), which serves to inform the 7th Commandment (Ex 20:14). The general nature of creation finds a more specific and defined application in the Mosaic Covenant and is later reapplied in the New Covenant context.

good". Genesis 2 advances this thought by adding that Adam's lack of a suitable helper was "not good" (Gn. 2:18). Yahweh reversed this negative assessment with the special, direct fashioning of just the right complement for Adam. As a "helper suitable for him" (Gn 2:18), Eve was the perfect complement for Adam relationally, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, physically, and sexually. Therefore, Adam could enthusiastically conclude of Eve: "This is now bone of bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gn. 2:23). It is on this basis that the creation ordinances for gender distinction, monogamy, and human sexuality should be understood throughout the rest of Scripture (Murphy, 2008:1-333). Consequently, this writer will refer to these ordinances as such, not creation law. Although, the subsequent related laws found their ground in the ontology of the creation ordinances.

4.1.2 The creation ordinance's context

These creation ordinances, it must be noted, are situated in a historical narrative context throughout Genesis. Contrary to Ancient Near Eastern legal collections, aspects of creation law that follow are revealed in the unfolding drama of narrative literature (Bruckner, 1995:101). Although prior to the fall, the Edenic commands were quite simple (Gn 2:14-16): positively, take care of the garden; negatively, do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Ryrie, 1967:246).

4.1.3 The broad applicability of the creation covenant

The general nature and broad applicability of creation is a distinctive aspect creation ordinances.[7] Greidanus (1985:43) observes that the general nature of the Genesis 1-2 covenant, although broad, is intended to govern all areas of life without the detail and pervasive nature of the Sinaitic covenant given by Yahweh to Israel. Greidanus(1985:46-47) reasons that since the creation paradigm of marriage is universal, this informs the specific statute against adultery in the 7th Commandment, which is also universal in its scope and application. That this command is often repeated in both testaments is further evidence of this general implication.

4.1.4 Creation and the patriarchal law

Creation law and the patriarchal law that necessarily developed out of it was not a later "anachronistic retrojection" (Wright, 2004:283) as some claim. The priority of law was

[7] Many OT scholars allude to the idea of creation law or a natural law that was instituted from the beginning. Goldingay (1990:45) theologically connects the doctrine of creation to later laws and concludes "there is an Old Testament natural theology". Regarding the issue of sexuality, Goldingay (1990:43) is convinced that the doctrine of creation "determines the ethical framework for understanding … sexuality." The means for relaying this to fallen image bearers is through narrative "stories, images, paradigms, and beliefs" (Goldingay, 1990:43), not in the more formal Suzerain-vassal format seen in the Sinaic covenant. Mauser (1996:13) promotes what he has termed a "creational ontology" which serves as the predecessor to both law and morality, which implies a creational inviolability related to gender distinction, monogamy, and human sexuality.

demonstrated in Abraham's obedience (Gn 26:4-5) to the God he feared. Rather, Mosaic law should be understood as a further advance on basic law already known and applied. In this sense, creation law is applied in a more particular and developed way for a given people at a given time within a unique covenantal agreement.

4.1.5 Means for communicating pre-Sinaitic law

The conduit for communicating this pre-Sinaitic law, according to McClain (1953:341), has two possible scenarios: In a post-fall world patriarchal law could have been conveyed through special direct revelation whereby God disclosed what the patriarchs needed to know. Another possibility is that people instinctively sensed right from wrong in accordance with Romans 2:14, and amended their behaviour accordingly (Greidanus, 1985:51; Merrill, 1987:303). In the instance of Cain and Able (Gn 4:1-11), there was no stated prohibition related to murder. Yet Cain was held to account for his homicidal act.[8] Perhaps Cain instinctively knew murder was a flagrant violation against the giver of all life. Rather than an either/or choice from the preceding views, one could conceivably adopt a mediating position which sees the viability of both the above views.

4.1.6 Creation ordinances and human sexuality

Creation ordinances are expressed universally in the sphere of sexuality as outlined in the Genesis 1-2 account (Greidanus, 1985:46-48; Mauser, 1996:5; Seitz, 2000:191).[9] The creation account addresses paradigmatic rudiments of gender differentiation[10] (Goldingay, 2009:381-382), monogamy (Gen. 2:23), sexuality, and marriage complementarity (Ortland, 1991:95-112) which all serve as the basis for the 7th Command. This creation paradigm for sexuality and marriage (Gn 1:27-28; 2:23-24) provides a template[11] which is considered to be universally

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[8] Murder is not explicitly prohibited until Genesis 9:1-7 in a post-flood context.

[9] Seitz (2000:191) proposes that because Jesus reaffirmed "Genesis 1-2" this establishes God's "will for sexuality" i.e., creational order and creational design.

[10] The issue of gender differentiation is addressed by Eichrodt (1967:126-127), who notes that male/female differentiation (distinction) is one thing that distinguished ancient Israel from her ANE neighbours, who were given to gender confusion. Eichrodt (1967:126) states that, where Israel was concerned, "in creation all ambiguity between the sexes is removed." In contrast to this, Bird (1987:44), a pro-gay advocate, makes the claim that the creation account of gender is neither "quantifiable" nor is it "subject to qualitative analysis" i.e., gender is portrayed as ambiguous much as the ANE pagans thought. Like most pro-gay interpreters, Bird finds it necessary to dehistorize the creation account in order to distil its intertextual influences.

[11] The defining characteristic of the marriage/sexuality paradigm in Genesis 1-2 is so certain that Dresner (1991:309) remarks it makes the husband and wife relationship "axiological". He further contends (Dresner, 1991:309-310) that subsequent biblical narratives "can be read as a continuous attack on the widespread sexual deviance which often challenged and seduced the Israelites." Dresner (1991:311) further posits that the Genesis flood narrative was precipitated by the distortion of Genesis 1-2 natural order, which resulted in sexual "wickedness" and the corresponding divine judgment.

applicable as it is appropriated in the Pentateuchal context. Marshall (2003:177, 178) maintains that the 7th Command is informed by a creational understanding of marriage which, when consistently applied, precludes any number of relational combinations to even include lesbian relationships. This was meant to safeguard familial stability which was critical to a functional society.

An example of this patriarchal appropriation is seen in the Sodom and Gomorrah passage of Genesis 19:1-8, where the violation of the one-man-one-woman mandate invokes the Lord's judgment on the gentile Sodomites. In Genesis 20, Abimelech, a gentile king, even recognized that adultery merited the death penalty, which antedates passages like Deuteronomy 22:22-27. Closer to the context of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, God holds gentile nations like Egypt and the Canaanites accountable for the sexual sins delineated in 18:6-23, to include homosexuality. By the time of Acts in the New Testament era, the early church was given a similar general injunction (Ac 15:28-29) against idolatry, animal sacrifice, and immorality.[12]

In light of this, Greidanus(1985:47) concludes that there is a universal, transcendent standard for human sexuality which extends from creation: "There is a norm for sexual morality that finds its origin in creation itself … it is a norm based on God-given nature of which all people ought to live by gender distinction and monogamy".

4.1.7 Amplification of creation ordinances into law

The legislation of the Mosaic covenant is further "amplification" of creation and patriarchal law (Harman, 1997:519; McClain, 1953:341; Rooker 2000:67).[13] The parallels lend further credence to this implied intertextual interrelationship: namely, the existence of Edenic law (Gn 2:15-17); the presence of cultic law (Gn 3:22; 4:4 cf. Heb. 11:4); tithing (Gn 14:20); and the necessity for circumcision (Gn 17:10-14). In close connection with this thought, Barrick (1999:223-224) believes that the Decalogue was "not a totally new revelation", but a "fresh restatement of some key principles … inferred from creation and patriarchal narratives."[14] When applied to the

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[12] The New Testament term πορνεία is translated "immorality" or "fornication", which is an overarching term (Hammond, 2001:114-118) referring to "all extra-marital sex" (Botha, 2005:65) implying all sexual deviations from the Genesis 1-2 template.

[13] Harman's (1997:519) analysis of the interrelationship between Creation and Sinai is worth repeating: "The Decalogue forms part of the constitutional charter that God provided for Israel as a nation. Most, if not all, of its basic precepts can be inferred from creation and patriarchal narratives, and they strongly reference the morality of creation. However, it also contains the foundational document setting out the constitution of Israel as a nation. It was imposed by the King who redeemed Israel, giving his requirements for his vassals and citing transgression of them."

[14] *Contra* Pro-gay adherents take a more anthropocentric and cultural-centric view of the creation account related to gender, marriage, and sexuality. For his part, Seow (1996:17-34) tries to limit Genesis 1-2 maintaining (Seow, 1996:27-30) that Genesis does not tell the "full story of creation" and "creation is not as orderly as we would like to believe". Therefore, the way to approach the thorny issue of homosexuality, according to Seow, is a man-centred

priestly legislation of Leviticus, Burnside (2006:417) believes "The complex structure of Leviticus suggests a coherent sexual ethic that is tied to creation."

The creational context is therefore of critical importance in the discussion of the interrelationship between the two testaments. There is a transcendent quality in the creation pericope that extends to all cultures in every age (Bruckner, 1995:91). Additionally (Bruckner, 1995:102), even though the redemptive context of Sinai has been eclipsed by Christ, the creation context "is retained as long as creation endures." This means the original contract God made with humanity in the beginning has present-day ramifications whether most are cognizant of these universals or not.

4.2 The nature of Mosaic Law

Creation provides a colourful background that serves to highlight Mosaic law coupling it to creation itself. It is this background that constructs a framework for the Levitical passages (18:22; 20:13) under examination here. It has been established that there is a creational legal precedent extending back to the beginning. Influenced by creation, Exodus details Yahweh's salvific act of delivering Israel from her bondage to Egypt. Yahweh then formalizes his unique and elective relationship with the Hebrews by ratifying a Suzerain-Vassal Covenant,[15] binding himself to his chosen people. This bi-lateral treaty initiated a bi-lateral (Eichrodt, 1961:37), reciprocal relationship with Israel. Such a treaty was well known throughout the Ancient Near Eastern world. What flowed from this divinely given promissory agreement God ratified with Israel was a series of legal stipulations[16] which were progressively and divinely revealed in a narrative context.

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theology (Seow, 1996:28) that does not "ignore nature, science, reason, and experience" (Seow, 1996:31). The implication here is that the traditional biblical position does in fact ignore the former. Bird's (1987:36, 38-39) contention is that Genesis 1-2 addresses "nature" in Chapter 1, while Genesis 2 emphasizes the "psycho-social" dimensions of the one-man one-woman relationship. Hence, the creation account must be interpreted as a "multivalent and multidimensional reading" given the historically conditioned text. Yet, as Mauser (1996:3-15) counters, Genesis 1-2 is fundamental and basic to the NT perceptions of human sexuality and mind-sets.

[15] See Chapter 3 (3.2.1.2 and 3.2.1.4).

[16] In relationship to creation, Fretheim (1991:365) concludes that the giving of law, divinely promoted the "ongoing … task" of reclaiming creation. This weds well with the connection between redemption and creation, with redemption as a means to restoring pre-fall creation on some level.

In the post-ratification narrative, the essential nature of the Mosaic law unfolds within the corpus of the narrative drama of the Pentateuch. The following nine elements testify of the legal nature of these laws:

4.2.1 Mosaic law and its covenantal context

Mosaic law is clearly situated within a covenantal context[17] initiated by divine grace.[18] The covenantal unit in Exodus 19-24 is a vital theological portion that profoundly influences the rest of the Old Testament and New Testament (Barrick, 1999:213). Other scholars concur with such sentiment, with Hays (2001:26) stressing the necessity of acknowledging the covenant setting, while Merrill (1987:298) describes covenant as the "hub around which all else is organized." The predicate for this divine covenant is the grace of Yahweh (Selman, 2003:510; Wenham, 1979:31). In this environment of divine grace, Israel was meant to reciprocate grace with human gratitude as expressed through a willingness to obey the laws of the God who redeemed them. To paraphrase Wenham (1979:31), redemption was designed to secure Israel's obedience to the deliverer. Therefore, the Jews were not free to live an antinomian lifestyle but were to obey the laws issued out of a disposition of gratitude.

Because the covenants were, in Wenham's (1979:33) words, "arrangements of divine grace"[19] they were "arrangements" Yahweh unilaterally initiated and formed a relationship between himself and his vassal, Israel. The covenant included regulations meant to promote a grateful response to Yahweh's electing love. As a result, these laws are not intended to be isolated from the covenant milieu in which they are found (Walton, 1994:170). When evaluated in the original covenantal setting, it will be observed that these particular stipulations were not universal axioms disclosed to all of humanity, but were meant to be applied to Israel and her unique relationship with Yahweh, in a unique time and place (Marshall, 2003:177-178).[20] The dynamic

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[17] The point is well made by Barrick (1999:216) that no one covenant "superseded or nullified" a preceding covenant or covenants, because each successive covenant was an advance on a previous covenant without "abrogating it". So each covenant telescopically was built on the one before it until it culminated in the New Covenant. In this there is a unity and agreement that allows the interpreter to find applications for modern day believers.

[18] OT scholar Von Rad demarcates from the common view that Yahweh's covenant with Israel was a demonstration of grace already received. For his part, Von Rad (1989:193-194) contends that the law "was offered" as "the saving gift of life". So, in Von Rad's estimation, the commandments are considered to be the mechanism of redemption e.g. the commandments relate to justification, not sanctification. In contrast Zimmerli states (cited in Seleman, 2003:510) that "the election of Israel is unthinkable without the validity of its divine law and the concealed, threatening judgment within this law."

[19] While Pentecost (1971:228) agrees that Mosaic law was given to a redeemed people (Heb 11:28), he reminds readers that they (Israel) were nevertheless a "spiritually immature people".

[20] This does not in any negate the prospects of a universal application of these laws for other peoples in other times, places, and cultures.

relationship between Yahweh and Israel was further defined by the Decalogue and subsequent divine imperatives, all of which were intended to unify Israel based on a “common law, common cult, and common historical consciousness” (Eichrodt, 1961:39). So covenant is one the necessary keys to unlocking the authorial intent of the laws that flow from it.

4.2.2 Mosaic law and narrative

In close connection with the previous argument, the narrative context is associated with Mosaic law. It is this narrative setting that brings a more relational tone and sense to Mosaic law, distinguishing it from the more impersonal laws of Israel’s neighbours (Martans, 2002:206). The entire Pentateuch is steeped in law (Goldingay, 1990:46-47) despite the narrative nature of the genre. It is Wright who emphasizes that Mosaic law can only be interpreted in this narrative context which, according to Wright (2004:283), includes everything from ancient poetry to obituaries. Unlike other Ancient Near Eastern law codes, Israel’s law collection was woven in the fabric of an ongoing storyline. So why is law revealed in the variety of contexts narrative affords? In all likelihood, narrative exposes the comprehensive and integrative nature of the law for everyday life and living for the Hebrews. The Mosaic stipulations were crafted to pervade all of life from the ordinary and mundane to the extraordinary. These laws that stem from covenant are part and parcel of the narrative storyline, instilled deeply into the whole fabric of life and culture of ancient Judaism.

4.2.3 Mosaic law as a unity

One of the cardinal characteristics of Mosaic law is that it is a unity[21] that should not be compartmentalized into the standard jurisdictions of moral, civil, and cultic. Scripturally the law is referred to holistically (Js 2:10; Gl 5:13). The overwhelming consensus from the articles consulted for this chapter unanimously concluded that traditional tripartite distinction — moral, civil, and cultic — is an inaccurate description because law is a fundamental unity (Barrick, 1999:228; Hays, 2001:23; McClain, 1953:334-335; Moo, 1996b:337; Rooker, 2000:70-71; Ross, 2002:58; Ryrie, 1967:241). This tripartite designation may be helpful in emphasizing certain aspects of a law, but it is arbitrary and artificial to classify the law into a tri-fold distinction.

Barrick concludes that the laws are “intertextually interwoven” with differing laws lying next to one another. Leviticus 19 is a great illustration of Barrick’s assertion as 19:2 establishes an overarching context of holiness. In Leviticus 19:18 one finds the famous dictum to love one’s neighbour as oneself, which is cited by Christ in the New Testament. In the very next verse is found the command not to mate two different breeds of cattle together, not to sow the same

[21] *Contra* Kaiser 1996b:188-190.

field with two kinds of seed, and not to wear clothing fashioned from two kinds of fabric. What is clear is that the wide array of laws found in Leviticus 19 forms part of what it means to be holy in God's sight for the ancient Jews. As Yahweh's unique possession, his people were to live separated lives, which were illustrated in even the most mundane aspects of life. So, as Dorsey (1991:329) warns, "law is a unit". Likewise the New Testament assessment is that law is a monolithic unit. All of which is maintained by the singular use of the noun in New Testament terminology — "law" (McClain, 1953:336). So to classify some laws as "moral" in contrast to other laws is tendentious given that each of the 613 laws has a moral sense. The 4th Commandment would appear to represent all three designations of moral, civil, and cultic.

It is acknowledged that although law is a designated unit, not all laws carry the same moral weight. Christ placed the laws into a moral hierarchy (Mt 23:23-28) contrasting justice, mercy, and faith with laws related to tithing, mint, dill, and cumin (Martans, 2002:210; Moo, 1996b:337). Although law is a holistic unit, not all laws are of equal moral and ethical import. This is illustrated by Averbeck (1995:122-123) who classifies cleanliness laws[22] in Leviticus into three classifications:

- Regular uncleanness which only requires a designated time period without sacrifices to be declared clean. Leviticus 15:16-24 exemplifies this particular emphasis.
- Irregular uncleanness promoted by certain bodily excretions (Lv 15:1-15) finds purification through washing and sacrificial offerings.
- Severe uncleanness was significant enough to warrant exclusion from the community. Leprosy (Lv 13-14) prompted such drastic action. Once a Hebrew was no longer afflicted with the malady, he/she had to wash in accordance with priestly rituals (Lv 14:2-9) and then offer the appropriate atoning sacrifice.

In like manner, while there is basic unity in the law, the various penalties attached to the breach of various laws speak of a sliding scale of moral importance, with the most severe penalties (Wenham, 1979:35) reserved for the more flagrant moral violations. Averbeck's tripartite categories for cleanliness laws strongly suggest that within the essential unity of the law there is an embedded diversity (Rooker, 2000:71) whereby not all laws are equally weighted. Rather than segmenting the law into three distinct components, Wright (2004:289-302) advises the need to evaluate and categorize the Old Testament law in relation to its own time, culture, and Ancient Near Eastern background. Only then can the authorial intent of the law be known.[23]

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[22] See Hartley (2003:420-431) for elaboration on the cleanliness laws of Leviticus 11-15.

[23] Wright (2004:289-302) offers an alternative categorization suggesting a five-fold designation that includes: (1) criminal law; (2) case law e.g. casuistic law with its "if", "when" formula; (3) family law whereby the head of the

4.2.4 Mosaic law as a foundational precedent

One of the often unstated and ignored aspects of Mosaic law is that it was meant to be representational in nature. This indicates that the law was never intended to be an exhaustive legal code that addressed every conceivable situation.[24] While the 613 laws were comprehensive in that they spoke to every area of life, including a great deal of coverage related to worship and idolatry. These stipulations, however, did not exhaustively detail every situation and circumstance that could conceivably arise. Instead, foundational precedents of God's divine will were issued (Burnside, 2006:407; Ellis, 2002:251; Fishbane, 1988:89, 95; Walton, 1994:159).[25] From these precedents, those sitting in judgment could extrapolate a judgment,[26] based on existing known law, for particular situations that may not have been explicitly mentioned. An example of this is found in the context of Leviticus 18:6-23: although the incest proscriptions cover a multitude of consanguineous and affinal relationships, some horizontal and some vertical, oddly a father/daughter violation is not stated. Rather than supposing that silence equals approval, one could easily conclude, based on the creational ontology of the marriage relationship, and then the other represented proscriptions given in the immediate context, that it is obvious (Burnside, 2006:401) incest between the father and daughter is prohibited. Similar logic should be employed when explaining the silence of lesbian

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household assumed responsibility for legal provenance over the dependents in his household; (4) cultic, which Wright sub-categorizes into sacrificial laws, sacred calendar laws, and symbolic laws, like the cleanliness laws; (5) compassionate law that sought the welfare of aliens, widows, orphans, and Levites where justice and impartial judgments were sought that would benefit the disadvantaged.

[24] It is of interest that Taylor and Ricci (1995:116) discern that, "Legal comportment rewards self-interest; self-interest increases argumentation and blaming; and ever more cunning practices occur as the cultural-social order spirals downward in self defeat. As society decays its laws multiply. When the law (understood as rights) is necessary in heavy doses, it is ineffective; and when effective, it is not really necessary in heavy doses. No one doubts that our society is hooked on law and that this addiction is proving lethal." Perhaps this explains, in part, why ancient Israel did not need an exhaustive legal code.

[25] Ellis (2002:253-254) further clarifies this notion of law's representational nature by including both apodictic and casuistic laws reflecting foundational principles. From these fundamental precepts, principles could be expanded based on the covenant, to make judgments not expressly addressed in the structure of the explicit law: "From these principles one could make judgments about behaviors not specifically addressed by any law … as Israel obeyed the law, she was molded in God's image." For his part, Fishbane (1988:95) agrees that biblical law collections may be considered "as prototypical compendia of legal and ethical norms rather than as comprehensive codes". In close connection with this sentiment Fishbane (1988:89) further explains that the "ancient law codes regulate only matters" where "the law is dubious, or in need of reform, or both". In similar vein, Wenham (1997:18) maintains that the law established a bare minimum standard "of behavior, which if transgressed" will then merit "sanction". By this Wenham (1997:28) means that the Law is to be "evaluated based on the ideals it expressed" not by "the standard it espoused." In this regard, the law is a basal starting point for practical righteousness.

[26] The Mosaic law was to serve as an objective, external source to guide the Hebrews individually and collectively as a people with decisions on a variety of issues being deduced from Israel's worldview — which was a worldview predicated on the 613 laws of God's covenant. Klein *et al.,* (2004:345) explain the representational nature of law this way: "Instead of a code in a modern sense, Old Testament laws present a select sample of illustrative cases or topics whose legal principles were to guide Israelite individuals, the larger community, and lawmakers in making decisions and living out Israel's worldview."

relationships in Leviticus 18:22. In the words of Burnside (2006:401), biblical law "as a restricted code" was not required "to spell out what it hearers and readers would have taken for granted."

For the reason given above, it is important that law be viewed as a law collection and not a complete code (Selman, 2003:500) to cover every eventuality. Because the law's status was representational in nature it had the intention of practically applying the comprehensive qualities of God's holiness (Martans, 2002:202). This was germane to all of life and living. To this end, the covenantal laws were regarded as guard rails that were to keep Israel on the road to holiness. The implication here is that the Torah was objectively adaptable to developing situations and circumstances not specifically identified in the existing written law collection (Lv 10:8-10).

This is well articulated by Burnside (2006:395-397), who advances the idea, based on binary oppositional structures, that adultery "is the narrative typification of sexual misbehavior in biblical law". Accordingly, this view reflects the representational aspect of the law. A practical example of this is witnessed in Leviticus 20:11ff where the sexual infractions cited are "variants" and "sub-headings" of the 7th Commandment. This indicates that Leviticus 20 is reaffirming "the centrality of the Decalogue in biblical law" and "it suggests" that Leviticus 20 serves as a more detailed elaboration of the "narrative typifications" found in the Ten Commandments. In Burnside's estimation, Leviticus 20 exemplifies an "application of Ockham's Razor" as "there is a parsimony in biblical law". This means that fornication is an additional expression of a type of adultery. From this Burnside concludes this is why the New Testament only needed one sexual category — πορνεῖαι — to cover every conceivable sexual distortion. Therefore, Jesus said, "If you look on a woman and lust, you have committed adultery in your heart" (Matt. 5:27-28). Likewise Wenham (1997:24) cites the sexual proscriptions found in Leviticus 18 and 20 as representative violations of the one-flesh doctrine rooted in creation.[27]

Based on the law's foundational qualities, Walton (1994:159) believes this to mean the covenant itself functioned more like a constitution, where the foundation for interpreting law was grounded in the covenant, meaning that covenant functions like a monocle through which law is read (cf. Fishbane, 1988:95). Walton (1994:159-160) further notes, this would mean that the binding force was not "in an enforceable legislation, but in the binding agreement of the

[27] In a 1987 article on Deuteronomy Walton (1987:213) follows the same line of thought based on his observations of that book's structure and development. He believes the Deuteronomic structure reflects "the broader morality behind" the Decalogue. This results in Deuteronomy serving as an expositional vehicle detailing the spirit of the Ten Commandments while testifying to the "representational nature of law". To illustrate this contention, Walton (1987:219) concludes that the sexual proscriptions of Deuteronomy 22:12-30 were variants of adultery that all threatened the dignity of the family unit.

covenant."[28] To this end, the stipulations were meant to be exegeted through the prism of the covenant and then applied to a changing culture in much the same way the American Constitution, or the South African Constitution, is the grid for interpreting existing laws in light of an ever evolving culture. The existence of the US Supreme Court (or the SA Constitutional Court) is precisely for the purpose of assuring that the existing laws, or new laws, are in accordance with the respective constitutional provisions of the country. In similar manner, ancient Israel's laws were to be read and applied within the covenantal framework given them in Exodus 19:1-8.

4.2.5 Mosaic law and its constitutional format

The prior point (4.2.4) alludes to the Mosaic law as Israel's constitution (Walton, 1994:159). The laws given to Israel in the Pentateuch find their centre of gravity in Israel's bi-lateral, bi-directional agreement with Yahweh. These regulations served as the foundation for God's covenant people and formed the constitutional framework for this new theocracy (Ross, 2002:60). The Jew's adherence to these laws was tangible evidence that they belonged to Yahweh. This distinguished Israel as a holy priesthood (Ex 19:6), distinct from the surrounding Ancient Near Eastern communities. The constitutional contours of the law further substantiate the claim that these laws were meant to be representational and precedent setting instead of an extensive penal code intended to address every eventuality of a fallen world. From this perspective, Walton (1994:170) concludes that the Old Covenant was never meant to be universally appropriated the way it was uniquely applied to Israel, because the stipulations were not meant to be "treated independently of its covenant context". Therefore, applications of Mosaic law outside of that covenantal context will not look the same for a variety of reasons to yet be discussed.

4.2.6 All law is moral

Another trait of Mosaic law is that it is all moral in some sense (Rooker, 2000:74). There is a moral dimension that characterizes all the laws at least at the level of principle. So, while the law had a particular expression for the time, people, place, and culture for which it was written, there are universal moral principles that need to be didactically examined before any modern applications can be drawn (Rooker, 2000:75; Wenham, 1979:34-35). In noting the theological substance of the law, Hays (2001:23) explains the moral hues of the law by citing Leviticus 19.

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[28] Walton (1996:160) helpfully comments that the law needed to be interpreted on the basis of the covenant itself, which he calls *traditum* (the authoritative covenant text) versus the *tradito* (interpretative legislation). So *traditum* was always meant to trump *tradito*. But as Walton (1996:161-162) explains: the contemporary 1st-century Pharisaical interpretations reversed the necessary order e.g. *tradito* eclipsed *traditum*. In other words the rabbis studied other rabbis' interpretations rather than relying on the covenant law itself. In so doing the Mishna was given priority over what should have been the Torah. This resulted in a more subjectively nuanced interpretation rooted in experience rather than the absolutes of an objective revelation.

Even though laws like sowing two different kinds of seed together in the same field may seem absurd to the modern mind today, yet the context (Lv 19:2) reveals that such laws must correspond to the separation that comprehensive holiness demands (19:2).[29]

4.2.7 Mosaic law has a personal quality

One of the outstanding features of the Mosaic law was personal, not impersonal. Unlike other Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Martans, 2002:206), like Hammurabi's code, Mosaic law was more an expression of Yahweh's personal will for his people. This gave the law a measure of adaptability even in light of its absolute character (Selman, 2003:507). King David illustrates the idea, for it was David whose capital crimes saw his sentence commuted based on his repentance. In reality, it is the lawgiver who is central in determining the normativity of the law itself. So the crux of Jewish law focuses on the source (Martans, 2002:207) of the law rather than the statutes. The book of Proverbs is an example of how the wisdom of God leads the God-fearer to numerous practical applications of the law. The issue here is that lawgiver sought an ongoing relationship with the recipients of law. In response, the law's recipients were expected to faithfully apply the law to a variety of situations without violating the meaning of the law. The legislation given was meant to regulate what was intended to be a reciprocal relationship between Israel and Yahweh. At its core law was a divine discloser of Yahweh's moral will, not just an impersonal code of human statutes (Selman, 2003:509). This is directly applicable to the relational purpose of the law which will be shortly considered.

4.2.8 Mosaic law and salvation

The Mosaic law was never purposed to be a soteric means of redemption.[30] Because the Hebrews received the covenant on the established the grounds of grace received (Goldingay, 1990:44) (see 4.2.1), the covenant stipulations were designed to enhance the Old Testament saint's worship and service for Yahweh (Barrick, 1999:219; Walton, 1994:171). So the Mosaic law was aimed at sanctification rather than the initial catalyst of salvation. Through faithful obedience, the Old Testament worshiper invited Yahweh's blessing (Barrick, 1999:219) as he/she demonstrated genuine faith. This most certainly has hermeneutical implications for understanding the meaning of the law in both its ancient context and its present-day application.

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[29] See Cotton (1990:1-20).

[30] See Footnote 18 on Von Rad's use of the law as soteric means.

4.2.9 Mosaic law and Ancient Near Eastern analogues

There are some notable contrasts between Mosaic law and other contemporary Ancient Near Eastern law collections.[31] It is undeniable that there were numerous similarities between Pentateuchal law and Ancient Near Eastern codes. Selman (2003:507) discusses some of the key parallels between the two systems of law. For instance in Ancient Near Eastern legislation, the king played an integral role in promoting the law and justice of the gods in relation to the marginalized of society (cf. Walton, 1994:158-159). The king had been conferred divine authority by the gods to faithfully represent the cosmic order of the pantheon — of course Yahweh was Israel's King representing himself. In addition, there were structural and formulaic comparisons like the inclusion of casuistic law. To a lesser extent, Ancient Near Eastern law employed apodictic commands.

In contrast to the resemblances between the two law systems, Eichrodt (1961:75-82) outlines five clear disparities between Ancient Near Eastern and Mosaic law:

- In Mosaic law, the presence and notion of God dominates the entire law collection. The mention of Yahweh is more than a mere mention in the prologue and epilogue, as it is in Ancient Near Eastern law.[32] The book of Leviticus has over 50 internal references to Yahweh's oversight and disclosure of the Levitical legislation.

- The Mosaic law accentuates the worship of God with numerous regulations related to the monotheistic worship of Yahweh and stern commands against idolatry.[33] The first table of law directly relates to this fact. All of this is vital to moral action, so that there is a direct correlation between right worship and holy living.

- Mosaic law was not ordered and formatted like the other Ancient Near Eastern collections, which were separate from narrative and more extensive in scope. Mosaic law was concerned with revealing Yahweh and defining his relationship with Israel.[34]

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[31] See Currid (2013:1-149) for a more detailed list of significant distinctions between Mosaic law and that of Israel's neighbours.

[32] An example of this given by Eichrodt, who cites Hammurabi's code to illustrate the point: In Hammurabi the god Shamash is only explicitly mentioned in the formula and introduction.

[33] Iconoclasm, according to Oswalt (2009:65-66), was one of the distinguishing features of ancient Jewish worship which is in stark contrast to the common use of images amongst Israel's pagan neighbours (Oswalt, 2009:57). In the words of Oswalt (2009:65), "A second characteristic of Old Testament thought is iconoclasm: the insistence that God may not be represented in any created form … the uniqueness of this idea must be stressed."

[34] This idea predominates in Oswalt's 2009 work *The Bible among the myths* especially Chapter 5 where Oswalt contrasts the Bible with the ancient myths of the Israel's neighbours.

Hence, Israel's law was stitched into the fabric of the narrative, because it was integral to this bi-directional relationship. This again communicates the representational quality of the law (see 4.2.5).

- The accent of Mosaic law highlighted pronounced moral sensitivities in the following ways: (1) the value of human life was prioritized and elevated, while in most Ancient Near Eastern settings human abuse and devaluation of life were not uncommon; (2) the Mosaic law sought to abolish the barbarous brutalities in punishing the guilty, whereas codes like Hammurabi's sanctioned mutilation[35]; (3) unlike comparative Ancient Near Eastern law, Mosaic law promoted equal justice for all alike with no class distinction or prejudice against the alien and foreigner. All were to be equally protected under the law of Yahweh.

- Lastly, Mosaic law established a higher moral sense in relations between the sexes. For instance, in Babylon a man could sell his wife into slavery for some perceived offense. In ancient Israel, the family was the unit of a stable society, accordingly the head of the household was responsible for the extended family. Thus, sexual violation, like those found in Leviticus 18:6-23, were treated with greater severity in Israel than in other Ancient Near Eastern communities.

In all of this the nature of the law is such that it was never intended to be an end in itself. Rather, the Mosaic collection was designed to reveal the ultimate end of the law, Yahweh. In this way, the law was a means to the end of disclosing the God of Israel. The Mosaic regulations were given to exposit the nature and character of Israel's unique Suzerain and further serve to regulate the means of Israel's relationship with the law-giving God.

4.3 The purpose of Mosaic Law

The distinctive nature of Israel's law collection is proportional and reflective to its divine purpose.[36] As already indicated (cf. 4.2.1), the law was not intended to have a soteric purpose. On the contrary, the stipulations given ancient Israel were dedicated to defining Israel's new won freedom in relationship to their covenant-keeping God (Selman, 2003:509-510). The multifaceted purpose of the law was revelatory on both the vertical and horizontal plains reflecting Yahweh to Israel and Israel's corresponding response to grace already received. In

[35] Dorsey (1999:15-16) concurs with Eichrodt, commenting that Mosaic law demonstrated greater sensitivity toward women, slaves, widows, the poor, ethnic minorities, and disapproval for any class system like that found in Leviticus 19:15-16.

[36] This point was already summarized in Chapter 3 (3.2.1.3.). What follows here is a more detailed treatment in the specific context of relating Levitical law to the NT.

short, the Mosaic legislation was instructive (*tôrâ*) to teach the Hebrews what it meant to live in the unique presence of their God.[37]

The purpose of the law is varied with Pentecost (1971:229-233) citing ten reasons why the law was given. Others, like Barrick (1999:230), and Ross (2002:60-62), cite five purposes of the Mosaic legislation. It is the aim of this paper to briefly explore five aspects of the divine purpose for the Old Testament law collection:

4.3.1 The law as revelation

The Old Testament law serves as a mechanism for revealing the nature and character of Israel's God, Yahweh. At its core the law was the self-disclosure of God to Israel with each stipulation somehow, and to varying degrees, detailing the nature and personality of the Suzerain of the covenant (Barrick, 1999:226-227; Dorsey, 1991:325; Moo, 1996b:324; Pentecost, 1971:233; Rooker, 2000:76; Ross, 2002:60-62; Selman, 2003:509; Walton, 1994:171). By revealing his character to his vassals, Yahweh then commands conformity to that which has been revealed. It is Barrick (1999:227) who states that the covenant promise emphasized divine sovereignty while stipulations received by Israel outlined human responsibility. It is through the regulations that something of the law-giver is disclosed and a corresponding response is required from the recipients of this legislation. Here, a bi-directional sense of revelation can be seen, with God revealing his person to Israel so that Israel will reflect God in response and so fulfil being a light to the nations.

One of the central distinguishing features of law is that it expresses the will of the Lord based on his divine nature and attributes of Lord (Selman, 2003:509).[38] This in turn was to become embedded in the culture of Yahweh's special possession, Israel. From a legal, or regulative, standpoint none of the 613 regulations of the Sinaitic Covenant are required today. Yet, from a revelatory and pedagogical sense, all 613 laws are still binding today (Dorsey, 1991:325) and have a unique application for this age. This point is vital for understanding the applicability of Old Testament law in a New Testament context, for if law reveals the dimensions of God's nature and character, then his immutability and eternality dictate that these Old Testament directives still reflect something of the nature and effulgence of God even in New Testament environment. Where the Levitical sexual proscriptions are concerned, it is the interpreter's task

[37] God revealed himself to the ancient Hebrews in a very unique tangible expression in the Holy of Holies, and as he led Israel through the wilderness in cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. At other times he manifested himself in theophanic glory cf. Leviticus 9:22-24.

[38] Selman (2003:509-510) explains how the "character of Yahweh pervades all law collections". The Ten Commandments illustrate uniqueness, justice, righteousness, holiness, love, faithfulness, eternality, singularity, and jealousy of God. This, then, elicits an appropriate response on the part of the recipients.

to determine what these laws disclose and how they are to be applied in a church-age setting. This facet of God's divine decrees has a ubiquitous and timeless quality that seeks serious deliberation by New Testament interpreters in the present.

4.3.2 The law as relational

Closely related to the revelatory features of Mosaic law is the relational aspect of the 613 regulations. In light of the revelatory purpose of the law, one meets the person-centred[39] qualities of the law that lead to the relational goals the law was meant to regulate. The Mosaic statutes are not intended to operate in an impersonal atmosphere deprived of a reciprocal relationship between the Suzerain and his vassals, like what is witnessed in civil law codes in nations today. This relational purpose of the law directly related to the worship of Yahweh as the Sinaitic covenant promotes the necessity of worship (Barrick, 1999:216). Worship demands particular regulations for specifying and defining such worship. Israel's relationship with Yahweh could not develop in the vacuum where legislation was absent. Relationships necessitate the presence of regulations to effectively manage them and continue developing them. Israel's relationship with Yahweh was no exception.

4.3.3 The law expositing God's holiness

A further purpose of Old Testament law is that it was circumscribed in the comprehensive holiness of Israel's God. Although the law is not an exhaustive legal code, nevertheless, the numerosity and variety of laws reflect "implications of the holiness of God" (Walton, 1994:171). The profusion of laws signals (Martans, 2002:203) that God's holiness is relevant to all of life and living, from murder, idolatry, sexuality to diet and bodily discharges.[40] Holiness is essential to Yahweh's nature which is why He educates his people on ethics based on the "framework of ontology", or being (Martans, 2002:203; Wright, 2004:286-287). As Pentecost (1971:229) phrases it, "all requirements laid on the nation of Israel were in light of God's holy character".

The constancy of God's holy nature is operational in all ages with the result that New Testament ethics of today's Christians should not be predicated on mere duty, but encouraged by a desired conformity to God's character and will. It is this *imitatio dei,* rooted in the ontology of the inscrutable God, which stands as the terminus for biblical ethics — this typifies the Spirit of the law, not the letter. Pentecost (1971:233) assures readers that the Yahweh's revelatory holiness

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[39] Martans (2002:207) points out that understanding the will of the law giver is a critical figuring out how the Old Testament legislation is normative for the current age.

[40] It is Hays (2001:23) who points out that all of the law is somehow related to God's holiness, even laws like Leviticus 19:19 where two kinds of seed are not to be sown together in the field, because such an injunction stands in the direct sunlight of Leviticus 19:2 where one is told "be holy as He is holy". While the rationale of Leviticus 19:19 is not known for certain, it was still a reminder God's complete holiness in some way.

is another enduring essential of God's law: "It is certain that the revelatory holiness of God within the law forms a permanent aspect of Law. Holiness does not change from age to age, and that which revealed the holiness of God to Israel may still be used to reveal the holiness of God to men today. It is this revelatory aspect of the Law that Paul refers to as holy, just, and good."

4.3.4 Law as a reminder of sin

A fourth purpose of God's law is a close corollary of 4.3.3, for when humanity confronts the comprehensively holy character of Yahweh it is a striking reminder of human sinfulness. The law acts to expose the sinful nature of man (Pentecost, 1971:230) in relation the unique holiness of God. Because the Lord's constitutional holiness is complete in its scope, what it exposes is the full-orbed depravity of humanity to include human thoughts, human words, and human deeds all compared with God's holy standard and found severely wanting. Pentecost (1971:230) states that violations of God's law are not just a lack of conformity with those laws, but also a lack of conformity to the holy character of the law giver.

The manifestations of human depravity the law discloses are in relation to all spheres of life reminding humanity how far short of God's glory they fall. The penalties of covenantal infractions also emphasized (Ross, 2002:60) the undeniable barrier between the law giver and the recipient (Rm 2:5-16; Gl 3:19). As a pedagogue, the law is designed to create a personal awareness of an individual's requirement for divine grace. In ancient Israel's context, this resulted in the officiating priest at the tabernacle/temple entrance evaluating the reason for the offerer's sacrifice to determine the reason and motive for such worship (Ross, 2002:61). As a pedagogue, the regulatory aspects of the Mosaic law were meant to point to Christ (Pentecost, 1971:233; Rooker, 2000:61), in whom the law found ultimate fulfilment.

4.3.5 Motivation for obeying Mosaic law

The final purpose of the Mosaic legislation was to regulate Israel's obedience in the context of grace already received. In the final analysis, obedience to the law was to be gilded by gratitude for elective grace received. The sum of God's holy law is an expression of love — love for God and love for those in the covenant community (Cotton, 1990:9). Here the bi-directional[41] nature of the law is witnessed. This bidirectionality includes both the attitude and disposition when obeying the law, as well as the observable action itself (Martans, 2002:202, 205). Thus, the Old

[41] Martans (2002:205) describes this bidirectional aspect of law obedience as being both internal and external. For the law is concerned with *being* before *doing* — to be holy so that one can live holy before God and humanity. So, there is an interiority that precedes external performance of the covenant stipulations (Lv 19:3, 14, 32 and Lv 19:17-18).

Testament believer, much like the New Testament believer, was to be motivated by acknowledgment of salvation with redemptive faith is a prerequisite for a life of obedience — sanctification — (Gn 15:6; Ex 4:5; 14:11; Nm 20:12; Dt 1:32; 9:23). Rooker (2000:75) summarizes this aspect of sanctification as "obedience to an authoritative standard of teaching (Rom. 6:17-19)".

4.4 The law and Christ

Established on the aforementioned explanation of the Pentateuchal law, the question is often asked if the New Testament completely abrogates the Mosaic law? In one sense it does. On the basis of the Mosaic covenant, 2 Corinthians 3:14 (cf. 3:6) indicates that Old Testament law is obsolete in view of a New Covenant[42] (Schreiner, 2010:67-71). Yet the New Testament establishes the abiding value of Old Testament law for the New Testament believer (Ellis, 2002:257). The summation of New Testament teaching on the matter is that a relationship with Christ results in a new relationship with the Mosaic law (Ellis, 2002:257).

The nature of a progressively revealed Scripture itself contends that there is an Old Testament precedent for "reframing the law" for subsequent generations (Ellis, 2002:254). Such a precedent is displayed in a comparison, and resulting contrast, between Deuteronomy 28 and Jeremiah's (31:31-34) description of the promised New Covenant. The advent of the New Covenant heralds the obsolescence[43] of the old, resulting in something substantially better.[44]

So what did Jesus say concerning his relationship to the Mosaic law? Didn't Jesus denounce the law (Mt 23:23; Jn 7:19)? In brief, Jesus declared the uniqueness of his relationship with the law in Matthew 5:17-19. He clearly indicated that his first advent was not for the purpose of "abolishing the law", but rather he came to "fulfil" (πληρόω) the law. In Jesus' own words, he did not come to negate (Martans, 2002:206) the law, but, as Hays explains, "to bring to its intended meaning" (2001:28). In Christ, all the righteous demands of the Mosaic law were fulfilled in total.

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[42] This is not to imply that the Christian is antinomian. It is as Barrick (s.a.:2) explains: "The Christian is under a different law (James 1:25; 2:8) … We are just free from the Law of Moses (Rom. 7:3; 8:2; Gal. 5:1)."

[43] Again, Barrick (1999:217) discusses what it means that the Mosaic Covenant was not abrogated: Based on Hebrews 8:13, the New Covenant made the old on "obsolete" (πεπαλαίωκεν), or "old fashioned and out of date". Each covenant formed its own "single, unified program of revelation" with the New Covenant standing on the shoulders of the Old Covenant. Hebrews 7:12 lends further substantiation to Barrick's assessment, speaking of the priesthood that was "changed" (μετατιθεμένης). This indicates a significant alteration has taken place, changing the very condition of the object undergoing the change (BDAG, 2000:642). One could describe this as a transformation of what formerly was into an entirely new entity.

[44] It is best to view the New Covenant as building on the Mosaic Covenant (Hays, 2001:28). As Walton (1994:155) explains this relationship between the old and new covenants: the New Covenant should be seen as completing the Mosaic Covenant, not replacing it.

As one who was born under the law, Jesus "completely obeyed the law so as to fulfill it" (McClain, 1953:340). In recognition of this he required others to obey the law during his earthly ministry. This is illustrated in the incident with the Rich Young Ruler in Matthew 19:17-19. Yet on six different occasions Jesus and his disciples violated known Sabbath protocols. Moo maintains that these Sabbath infractions were meant to focus on the eschatological nature of the Sabbath itself which is realized in Christ (Moo, 1996b:355).

At this point it might be asked how this could be reconciled with Jesus' denunciation of the law (Mt 23:23; Jn 7:19)? But his denunciation of Mosaic law should be evaluated against the backdrop of the self-righteous applications that were only concerned with external exhibitions to the neglect of the eternal facets of the law. The primary problem Jesus addressed was related to hamartiology and errant interpretations of the law, not the law itself (Zemek, 1990:140).

In accordance with Matthew 5:17-19, Moo (1996b:353) explains that πληρόω indicates that Jesus eschatologically displayed "the standards of kingdom righteousness that were anticipated in the law". In reality, Jesus shifts the entire focus of the Mosaic law to himself. He redirects the emphasis of the law from the Old Covenant with it now taking on a new Christological significance (Hays, 2001:29; Moo, 1996b:355-356; Seitz, 2000:179). This helps explain the various Sabbath violations cited above. Here Martans (2002:206) underscores that biblical law is person-centred, with Christ serving as the epicentre for all law. One could say that in view of Christ, all biblical law now finds its centre of gravity in him (Jn 5:39-47).

4.4.1 Jesus' relationship with the law exemplified

After explaining his fulfilment relationship with the Old Testament law, Jesus then exposits how this new relationship is demonstrated in the following three ways:

- Some laws were intensified[45] (Barrick, s.a.:2; Gagnon, 2005b:740; Martans, 2002:209; Moo, 1996b:348-349): Subsequent to his statement in Matthew 5:17-19, Jesus proceeds to demonstrate what his fulfilment of the law looks like (Mt 5:21-22, 27-28). In the case of homicide and sexual ethics, Jesus intensified the demands as he underscored the attitudinal mandate of the law in an obviously explicit way. Here he highlighted the bi-directional intention of the law: mere external conformity was no longer a sign that one had kept the law. If one simply maintained wrong mental constructs of the act, it was enough to warrant guilt before the law. In relationship to heightened sexual ethics, Gagnon (2005b:740) remarks that this intensified ethic places an "emphasis … on sexual restraint, not freedom".

[45] In the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus added the qualifying statement "but I say to you" (Mt 5:22, 28, 32, 39, 44) as a way of declaring an intensification of the law's demands (Barrick, s.a.:2).

Now, even fantasizing about sexuality is a violation and distortion of God's original intention. From this, it is clear that sexual activity is categorically different than dietary laws, for even mentally entertaining sexual distortion is, in Gagnon's (2005b:740) words, "already defiling before the act is committed".

- Some laws were elevated: As he continued in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus elevated certain laws (Mt 5:33-37, 38-42, 43-47), like divorce, where he stressed "marriage indissolubility over the principle of sexual rights and self-fulfillment" (Gagnon, 2005b:740). In reality what Jesus is doing is recalibrating the law into a new category that is epitomized in Christ himself.

- Some laws were nullified: Many of the 613 Old Testament laws had served as boundary markers specifically for the nation of Israel in that time and place. The elements of the law like Sabbath(s), circumcision, and food laws (Mk 7:15-19; Eph 2:16; Col 2:16-17) distinguished Israel from the other nations and set them apart. These were repealed in the sense that there was no longer a need for them in the New Covenant dispensation (Rooker, 2000:68-69). From a sacrificial standpoint, Hebrews records the balance of the Levitical sacrificial system being irrevocably altered in Christ (Heb 7:12, 14; 8:13; 10:1-14; 1 Pt 2:5, 9). All of these rites, ceremonies, and shadows now find their completion in Christ's atoning death[46] (Seitz, 2000:187). Confident access into the presence of God is now solely on the basis of Christ's blood and righteousness (Heb 10:19). Hence, the Old Testament laws that served as boundary markers in ancient Israel have lost their force in the face of New Covenant realities (Seitz, 2000:187). The Mosaic law was never intended to have a universal application beyond ancient Israel (Walton, 1994:170).

While these shadow laws, like dietary laws and ritual purity laws, no longer apply as they once did, they still teach timeless truths (Klein *et al.,* 2004:348). These truths teach various lessons like the importance of separation and distinct living in all of life, as well as the importance of relating to God on his holy terms, not humanity's. In the revelatory sense, these laws still find purpose in the New Testament economy, while the particular regulatory aspects these laws represented in ancient Israel fall away. It is like cracking a walnut and dispensing the shell. What is left is the actual walnut itself.

4.4.2 Jesus and the sum of the law

The relationship between Christ and the Old Testament law he came to fulfil finds its apex in Matthew 22:37-40. Here Christ abridges the New Testament ideal for law keeping — love. The

[46] In the New Covenant economy it is still impossible to please God apart from atonement (Selman, 2003:502).

new law he expounds is to be discerned through a life of love. Yet, as Schreiner (2010:102) explains, “such love is expressed in a life of virtue”.

In the parameters of biblical love, it is God who serves as the necessary precursor to loving one’s neighbour. A stress on loving one’s neighbour apart from first loving God on his holy terms is to redefine the divine love that is here implied. Horizontal love must take its cue from a comprehensive vertical love for God (Hays, 2001:29). Loving God on his terms makes loving one’s neighbour possible. Through the lens of biblical love all the Old Testament law applies to the Christian, but only as it is predicated on Christ (Klein *et al.,* 2004:347).

To say that divine love is the summit of law keeping does not imply any variation of antinomianism, libertinism, or subjectivism (emotionally conditioned behaviour). Rather, it means that all personal conduct and all the law of God must now be weighed by the standard of God’s love as exhibited in Christ (Ellis, 2002:257). It is important to stress here that New Testament Christians do not seek to keep the Decalogue as a way of maintaining the New Covenant. Instead, they find in the commandments a way to express their love for God (Marshall, 2003:181). No one who genuinely loves God and seeks to reflect his character to humanity commits murders, adulterates, steals, lies, or covets (Schreiner, 2010:106).

Consequently, the gospels record that the advent of Christ ushered in a new relationship with Old Testament law grounded one in the provisions of the New Covenant. Now all law must be interpreted through a distinctly Christological lens that finds its crescendo in a love defined in the character of God alone. Love cannot be divorced from God’s character and, therefore, is morally normative for the Christian in a revelatory sense (Schreiner, 2010:104).

4.5 The law and Paul

If Jesus indicated a definite change in the relationship with Mosaic law, what does Paul have to say concerning the nature of the New Covenant’s relationship to the Old? Based on his emphasis on the subject, it is apparent Paul’s understanding (Martans, 2002:210) of the law was an extended explanation of what Jesus taught (Ac 10:15; Rm 14:1-23; 1 Cor 8:1-13; 10:23-11:1; Gl 2:11-14). In relation to this, both Romans and Galatians are prominent in this discussion, with 1 Corinthians 5-9 adding to the discussion (Rosner, 1999:11).[47]

To understand Paul’s thought about the role of the law in the Christian economy is not without difficulty (Ladd, 1983:495; Zemek, 1990:141). But Paul’s sometime depreciation of the law is

[47] For an extended discussion of Paul’s relationship to the Mosaic law see Schreiner (1993b:1-294).

levelled against the abuse of the law and misuse. For he argues, like Christ, against a wrong use of the law as a means of justification (Rm 2:17-3:8; 9:31-32; Gl 2:21; 3:2-3; 5:4; Phlp 3:9). So, as Zemek (1990:141) argues, Paul is addressing miscarriages of the law to include its anthropocentric misuse. The problem is not with the law itself, but with people and their hamartiological application of it. It is the law that reveals human sinfulness instead of redeeming it.

4.5.1 Christ the culmination of law

While Paul copiously references the law in Romans, his analysis parallels his thoughts presented in Galatians 2-3. Rather that dealing with all of the nuances presented by Paul, the most notable evaluation of the law is given by Paul in Romans 10:4, where Christ is said to be "the end of the law" (τέλος). There are a number of opinions regarding what Paul meant here, but it is not the purpose of this dissertation to explore the variety of those options. The view offered here is that τέλος, and the prepositional phrase εἰς δικαιοσύνην, "unto righteousness", share a syntactical relationship that has a teleological significance (Zemek, 1990:141-142). There is a sense of movement between the object and the prepositional phrase which indicates that the goal has been achieved. This gives τέλος the idea of culmination, not termination[48] (Ross, 2002:62). Of this consummative idea, Badenas (1985:148) concludes, "Christ brings to believers the righteousness promised in Scripture". It is in Christ that the law's purpose has been achieved in all its dimensions.

The culmination of the law in Christ then envisions a new relationship with a redefined law of Christ. In this changed relationship, the Mosaic law undergoes substantial modification in its application for the Church. In this altered relationship, as seen with Christ in the gospels, the Christian is no longer obligated to the boundary marking elements of the law. Laws pertaining to circumcision, dietary laws, and observance of special days (Rm 14-15; Gl 2:11-14; 4:10; 5:2-6) were all realized in Christ. All the shadow implications and sacrificial mandates find their culmination in Christ (Schreiner, 2010:90-91). In Paul's thinking the New Covenant is a new form of God's law (Moo, 1996b:368).

4.5.2 The law of Christ

The new relationship between the Christian and the law, as culminated in Christ, is announced in 1 Corinthians 9:21 and Galatians 6:2. In the 1 Corinthians 9:21 passage, Paul uses the phrase ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, or as the New American standard Bible (1995) terms it, "under the law

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[48] *Contra* Schreiner (2010:69) and Moo (1996b:357), who both give τέλος a polysemous (a multivalent meaning) meaning of culmination and termination. It is the opinion of this writer that this only serves to confuse the meaning rather than clarifying it. It is a better option to see "the end" as consummative. It is this consummation that provides a new platform in which to see the law as redefined and reappropriated in the person and work of Christ.

of Christ". Moo (1996b:368) defines this phrase as being "in-lawed" to Christ. The Corinthian context in Chapter 9 is addressing the law as it relates to the boundary distinctions between the Jews and the Gentiles, which under the New Covenant no longer exist. It is here, in the context of evangelization of the Gentile world, Paul states he is not under the law of God (Mosaic law), but is "in-lawed" to Christ with its provisions for observing the moral norms from the Old Testament law (Schreiner, 1993a:543).

In Galatians 6:2 Paul explicitly promotes the new understanding of law in his statement "the law of Christ". The context here directly links the law of Christ to the law of love Galatians 5:14. Schreiner observes that "the paraenesis" begins in Galatians 5:13 and concludes in 6:10 (1993a:544). The thesis of this paraenesis revolves around what it means to have life in the Spirit (5:16, 22-23, 25; 6:8). According to Paul, it is through the agency of the indwelling Spirit that the Christian can fulfil the law of Christ, and so fulfil the Old Testament moral requirements. As Ryrie (1967:246) describes it, "the law of the Spirit" (Rm 8:2) and "the law of Christ" (Gl 6:2) are synonymous ideas, not two separate thoughts.

4.5.3 The law of Christ related to love

Paul, like Christ before him, identified the injunction to love one another (Gl 5:14) with the summation of the Mosaic law. Paul informs the Galatians that the Mosaic law is "fulfilled" (perfect passive of πληρόω) in the command (Lv 19:18) to love one's neighbour. In keeping with the context, this is achieved by walking in the Spirit, displaying the fruit of the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit, bearing one another's burdens, and by sowing to the Spirit. This is all in contrast to the flesh driven life. One cannot claim to be loving their neighbour when they are walking in the flesh and consistently demonstrating the deeds of the flesh (Gl 5:19-21).

In close relationship to the Galatians pericope, Romans 13:8-10 issues a similar admonition to love one another with Paul relying on the demonstration of the Ten Commandments as an example of what love means. Again, love is not absent of moral norms. Apart from the moral norms that laws like the Ten Commandments provide, love "collapses into sentimentality and vagueness" (Schreiner, 1993a:544). Consequently, a moral ground is necessary to avoid reductionistic understandings of love.[49]

[49] In the ongoing discussion of homosexuality and same-sex marriage, detractors of the traditional biblical position on the subject are often accused of being "unloving". This notion of what it means to love evidences the sentimentality mentioned by Schreiner above.

Paul's conclusion on the priority of Mosaic law in the New Covenant is the same as Jesus'. The law finds its expression through the channel of love — God's love (1 Tm 1:5). For this reason, Schreiner notes, love is the "goal of Paul's instruction" as it serves to define "all values" (2010:105-106).

4.6 Summary of the Law's relationship to the New Testament

As a result of the Old Testament law's relation to Christ and the Christological uniqueness he brings to a redefinition of the law, what does this now mean for the 21st-century Christian? Moreover, how might this change in the relationship between the two testaments influence on the hermeneutical and exegetical process? In an attempt to summarize the place of the Mosaic law in the life of the 21st-century believer, here are 6 considerations:

1. There is now a new relationship with the law which finds its centre in the person and work of Jesus Christ. So Christ, in the words of Walton (1994:163), is to be superimposed over the entire Old Testament law. Some, like Ryrie,[50] say that the law has been "superseded". Walton's terminology more accurately conveys the relationship that Christians now have with the law: a law with Christ superimposed over the Mosaic framework and transforming it to be appropriated in a New Testament context. It is, therefore, best to emphasize a new Christological relationship between the Christian and the law (Selman, 2003:514).

2. The Church of God now relates to God in a non-nationalistic, non-Mosaic covenanted, non-theocratic state. The church is spiritually united although its composition is from all the peoples of the earth (Rooker, 2000:73). For this reason, those laws that distinguished ancient Israel from the other Ancient Near Eastern nations are no longer applicable given the universal scope of the world-wide church.

3. Love is now the circumscribing characteristic of New Testament law observance. This does not negate nor exclude the moral norms found in Old Testament law. On the contrary, this assumes the presence of these Old Testament norms and sees the indwelling presence of God's Spirit as necessary in seeking to apply these norms in a Christological environment.

4. The law, holiness, and the character of God are essential in any discussion concerning the Old Testament law. These are all inextricably combined so that the law explicates God's character in a revelatory way. The holiness of God attends all biblical law (Kaiser, 1996a:72). This, in turn, commands holiness in the life of the believer. So holiness remains vitally operative in the New Covenant context (Martans, 2002:211-212).

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[50] *Contra* Ryrie (1967:243-244).

5. All of the Mosaic law loses its “obligatory force”, but it still retains “its revelatory force” (Walton, 1994:170).

6. There is a definite continuity between the two testaments in relation to the law’s content. But there is a discontinuity in how Christians approach and apply the law in and through Christ (Seitz, 2000:185-186). So, while the principles undergirding Old Testament law are both valid and authoritative in a New Covenant setting, the applications will differ — sometimes drastically so (Wenham, 1979:35).[51] Caragounis (2007:105) explains that there is a substantial difference between what he calls the “form” of the law, and its “essence”. He stresses that while “Many of these historico-cultural forms of expression are no longer current today … the message has abiding validity. It is the word of God. It cannot change” (Caragounis, 2007:105).

By way of recapping the relationship of the Mosaic law to the New Covenant, Ryrie (1967:247) helpfully illustrates the spectre of the continuity-discontinuity tension when the two testaments are harmonized together in respect to biblical law: It is much like the various rules in a household with growing children. As different stages of maturity are attained, new rules are instituted while others are amended or even nullified. It is no contradiction to say that the former code is done away with all of its commandments. Even though a new code replaces the old, yet, it is still built upon it. So, while a teenage child still has a curfew, that curfew may be extended from 8 PM to 11 PM, but there is still a curfew. Punishments for various disciplinary matters will necessarily be amended depending on the age of the child. A 16-year old will no longer receive the swat he would have as a 4-year old. Yet discipline will still be meted out. It is a natural part of a growing household. In like manner, the Mosaic law has morphed and been transformed by the law of Christ in the New Testament. While the Old Covenant retains its revelatory dynamic, its obligatory weight is no longer mandatory. Consequently, the New Testament believer still relates to the Old Testament law, but in a whole new way which takes its cue from Christ. The purpose of the law is now found in Christ.

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[51] Barrick (s.a.:3) cites a couple of OT examples which demonstrate how various OT laws might apply in a Christological sense. The law in Deuteronomy 22:8 that prescribes parapets for ancient Israel is not demanding that westerners enclose the eaves of their pitched roofs with this ancient version of fencing. Neither is it a call to have flat roofs instead of pitched roofs. Rather what it teaches is that part of what it means to love one’s neighbour is to ensure they are safe and protected at the host’s home. The danger points of what the Christian owns should be addressed so that others are not unsafe when visiting another. The law in Leviticus 19:9-10 is another example of what it means to provide for the most vulnerable of society. It does not require one to buy land and become a farmer. Neither does it mean present day farmers must leave the edges of their fields or orchards for the poor. Although the gleaning principle is no longer enforced, this is not an excuse to neglect the most vulnerable in society today.

4.7 Hermeneutically approaching the law

The question must be asked then, how does the 21st-century interpreter of the Bible methodologically span the distance between the Old Testament and New Testament? How does one build a bridge between the Mosaic law and the New Testament without subjectively influencing the text with cultural assumptions? Based on the scholarship of a few different academics, the following model is proposed. First the interpreter's foundational presuppositions need to be examined before proceeding to a functional methodology that will serve to aid the interpreter in a more accurate appraisal of the textual meaning. At that point, the interpreter can then proceed to the application of that meaning for the present day situation.

4.7.1 Foundational hermeneutical presuppositions as priorities

The following foundational presuppositions are only suggestive, not exhaustive. But they are essential in seeking fidelity to the literal grammatical-historical methodology for interpreting Old Testament law in the New Testament environment:

1. Biblical authority: The Bible as the inspired, inerrant word of God is a necessary precursor to the hermeneutical process.[52] The whole of God's is equally authoritative and should serve as the primary point of the hermeneutical departure (Hays, 2001:30; Wright, 2004:315). Paul records his confidence in the whole of the Old Testament in his second letter to Timothy (2 Tm 3:16-17). This point helps keep the interpreter focused on seeking the authorial intention of the passage under examination.

2. Biblical unity: The Bible is an essential unity even though it is progressively revealed over the course of fourteen centuries. It should be acknowledged that within this unity there is diversity (Hays, 2001:30; Wright, 2004:315). The two testaments are linked together with the Old Testament informing the New Testament understanding in a different context. Throughout the Bible, the moral will of the immutable God is both constant and consistent. Although some discontinuity is present between the Old Testament and New Testament, there are principles predicated on God's character that are transhistorical and transcultural. These moral principles are not bound by time, place, or culture. The application of these principles may vary, but the essence of the truth remains valid through the ages.

3. Biblically acknowledge the mission: In the Old Testament, Israel was divinely elected by grace for the purpose of being a light to the surrounding Ancient Near Eastern nations (Ex 19:5-6). The Levitical laws under consideration in this work further informed this divine

[52] See 2.2.1 of this dissertation for a reminder of pro-gay assumptions regarding the veracity of Scripture.

purpose for the ancient Hebrews (Wright, 2004:319). Similarly, New Testament saints need to view the moral principles derived from the Old Testament in keeping with the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20).

4. A Biblical understanding of the law's function: In close relationship to the previous point, the law should be evaluated with respect of the specific mission for which it was given —being light to the nations. The law should be surveyed in direct relationship to its function for fulfilling the original purpose for which it was revealed i.e., aid Israel in her divinely mandated mission (Wright, 2004:319).

5. Pursuing a biblical paradigm: Both Wright (2004:62-75) and Martans (2002:199-216) are strong advocates for a paradigmatic approach for determining Old Testament principles for a New Testament application. It is Wright's (2004:62-75, 320-321) contention that Israel and the Mosaic law are paradigmatic beyond historical-cultural context. The reason for employing the paradigmatic approach is so that the paradigm acts as a grid. This grid helps the interpreter avoid carelessly abstracting principles that are forced and unnatural to the text.[53]

Equipped with these basal presuppositions in mind, the interpreter is now ready to proceed to the actual hermeneutical methodology.

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[53] It is not the purpose of this treatment to interact in detailed way with the paradigmatic approach. Both Wright and Martans do a good job in explaining what a paradigm is and how it functions. Both offer several examples of how paradigms function in the interpretive process (Also see Goldingay's discussion on the difficulties and tensions of principlizing OT law [1990:51-65]). Martans (2002:213) explains that the paradigm approach is about using boundaries to help extract principles that help inform Christian ethics (2 Tm 3:16). Wright (2004:63-64) further elaborates, "A paradigm is a model or pattern that enables you to explain or critique many different and varying situations by means of some single concept or set of governing principles. To use a paradigm you work by analogy from specific known reality (the paradigm) to a wider or different context in which there are problems to be solved … a paradigm may function descriptively or prescriptively or critically". Subsequently, Wright (2004:71) discusses the purpose of a paradigm is that it "preserves their historical particularity and forces us to observe all the non-reducible hard edges … of earthly reality with them". Again, it "forces" the interpreter to "constantly go back to the hard given reality of the text of the Bible itself". Likewise, Martans (2002:213) stresses the "boundaries" a paradigm affords the interpreter. Thus, the motivation for this model is one which desires to preserve the authorial intent of the text. As an example of the paradigmatic approach to seeking the normative principle, Martans' (2002:212) uses Leviticus 19:9-10 as a paradigm. He insists that the passage itself is a paradigm, not a principle. For this reason he concludes that the principle derived there is that one should assist the most vulnerable of society within the framework of one's modern-day vocation. Similarly, Wright (2004:72-73) uses Luke 10:30-39, The Good Samaritan, as an example of a paradigm to reassert the principle to love one's neighbour. Wright highlights that Jesus told his audience, "Go and do thou likewise", not "Go and do thou *exactly the same*". Wright (2004:73) notes that interpreter must move "from what we *know* Jesus did do to what we reasonably presume he *would* do in our changed situation". From this is seen the value in using Genesis 1-2, the creation account, as a paradigm for gender distinction, marriage, and sexuality (see Dresner, 1991:309-311, 320; Eichrodt, 1967:126-127; Goldingay, 1990:43; Greidanus, 1985:46-47; Mauser, 1996:3-15). While one may not agree with every aspect of Wright and Martans' paradigm approach, it does offer some safeguards from random principlizing. *Contra* the paradigm approach see Kaiser 2009:19-51.

4.7.2 Functional hermeneutical methodology

In many respects, the methodology proposed below is a regathering and categorizing of many of the hermeneutical principles already discussed related to the grammatical-historical interpretation. In this instance, though, it is for the specific purpose of deriving the meaning in the Old Testament and discerning its meaning for application in another milieu. There are 10 hermeneutical procedures that are sequential in their order. Although these may seem somewhat complex and cumbersome, to the experienced exegete they are ingrained and become second nature. The proposal here is attempting to avoid the two extremes of being either too simplistic or too complex (Goldingay, 1990:65):

1. Uncover the original author's intended meaning as it relates to the original audience (Dorsey, 1991:332; 1999:13; Hays, 2001:31): How was it understood in that original setting? Part of this process should also be attended with the understanding that this is ancient Israel's law, not the interpreters (Dorsey, 1991:332). This will guard against the what-it-means-to-me-approach so prevalent in the present day.

2. Observe the entire context (Averbeck, 1995:130): This includes the canonical context as well as the literary, covenantal, and cultural context of the day in which it was written (Martans, 2002:204-206). In Wright's (2004:321) words, "Distinguish the different kinds of law in the text". Is it apodictic or casuistic? In the case of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 both kinds of law are represented.

3. Engage the text grammatically and syntactically (Averbeck, 1995:130): Ask analytical questions related to both aspects here. What does the grammar reveal about the particulars of the law within its specific context? What syntactical relationships exist between the lexical meaning(s), phrases, clauses, and sentence relationships? All of this directly applies to uncovering the author's intended meaning.

4. Compare the text to other related passages: Assess the law(s) under investigation to other references of the same law, or with its nearest analogue(s). Begin with the nearest context and work concentrically from there to wider contexts that correspond to the law(s) being interpreted (Averbeck, 1995:130).

5. Look for analogues in the Ancient Near Eastern literature (Averbeck, 1995:130): While this is can be of tremendous help, such is not always the case. In the instance of the Old Testament sexual proscriptions. This dissertation has already determined that the Old

Testament is quite unique in its portrayal of sexual regulations having a far more detailed legislation on the matter than any other known Ancient Near Eastern community.

6. Determine the unique differences between the original audience and the interpreter: As the interpreter is in a different era, it is important that the significant distinctions between the two horizons are not merged and subsequently blurred. Hays (2001:31), informs his readers to examine the differing "theological and situational differences by comparing distinctions". Examples of this include the distinction between a secular state versus a theocratic state; or comparing Ancient Near Eastern pagan religions to the secular worldliness of the present. This enables the interpreter to remove the form and retain the essence of the passage. This is tantamount to removing the shell to preserve the kernel.

7. Examine the social and cultural importance of the specific law(s) under consideration: On the sliding scale of juridical values (Mt 23:23), ask how critical the law is for achieving the particular "social objectives?"[54] (Wright, 2004:323).

8. Maintain the original objective for the law(s) (Wright, 2004:323): Then develop universal paradigmatic principles from the text under consideration. It should be remembered that the principles derived should not be limited by time, place, or culture (Hays, 2001:31-32). They should be principles of universal scope which can be applied in any given context. It is at this stage the interpreter can ask questions based on the profitability of a verbal plenarily inspired text — 2 Timothy 3:16.

9. Correlate the paradigmatic principle to the New Testament teaching for the same or closest analogue: Is the command repeated? If so, are there any changes made? What alterations, if any, are made? An example of this can be seen by comparing Exodus 20:14 on adultery with Jesus version of the same in Matthew 5:28, or Paul's use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9:9 and 1 Timothy 5:18.

10. Seek to apply the extracted paradigmatic principle to the modern setting in accordance with 2 Timothy 3:16-17: (1) teaching i.e., doctrine: Are there any insights regarding doctrine? What is revealed about God? About man? About sin? ; (2) reproof: Are there any exhortations or rebukes in relation to humanity? Is there a sin to forsake? ; (3) correction: Is there any correction issued? Any encouragement rendered? What instructions are given for

[54] Sowing two kinds of seed in the same field will not carry the same weight as an apodictic command not to commit adultery. Legislation regarding a menstruating woman will not have the same import as regulations related to homosexuality. After all, a violation regarding the former did not carry the same capital penalty as the latter. Yet truths can still be gleaned from the more lightly weighted laws.

solving a problem, or enduring a trial?; (4) training in righteousness: What directives are given for ethical living in light of God's holy requirements? How should one live in light of the truth(s) learned?

4.8 Employing the hermeneutical methodology in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

In keeping with the preceding hermeneutical methodology, here is an example of how it applies to the text under discussion in this work:

Hermeneutical Methodology For Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13	
Hermeneutical Procedures:	Applied Passage: Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13
1. Uncover the original author's meaning:	This is the goal of the interpretative process and assumes the presuppositions of 4.7.1
2. Observe the entire textual context:	Extended context is Ex 19:5-6, so the parameters of the passages fall within the context of covenant; Geographical context is Sinai; Literary context is legal in nature; Immediate context is moral purity and specifically sexual purity as it relates to Israel's possession of the land; The greater Levitical context is one of holiness in the presence of the living and holy God (Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26).
3. Engage the text grammatically and syntactically:	Lexical, grammatical, and syntactical considerations were investigated in 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 with the conclusion that the proscription on homosexuality is both comprehensive and absolute in its negation of all homosexual activities for the entire male population of ancient Israel. By way of implication, lesbianism would also be proscribed — this is based upon the representational nature of covenant law establishing foundational precedents as well as seeing these laws as binary typification units.

4. Compare the passage with other related passages:	Old Testament textual analogues (3.2.5) were surveyed for clues and interrelationships related to a biblical sexual ethic for God's people: (1) Genesis 1-2 is seen as an ontological paradigm for sexual ethics—something that both Jesus and Paul reaffirmed (Mt 19:4-6; Mk 10:2-11; 1 Cor 6:12-20; Eph 5:22-32); (2) Genesis 19 and the Sodom and Gomorrah incident illustrates the terminus of consuming lusts that find release in irrational eroticism of which homosexual gang rape serves as moral synecdoche — a part that stands for the whole; (3) Judges 19-20 is a parallel account of Genesis 19, except this time it is the tribe of Benjamin, not the pagan Canaanites, that is inured to the rampant lusts that produce irrational fury associated with unrestrained immorality; (4) The problem of cultic prostitution within the pagan fertility cults (Dt 23:17-18[H18-19]) with their same-sex and its gender dimorphic propensities was considered; (5) Deuteronomy 22:5 is a warning against erasing and or blending gender distinction which is a creational distinction in Genesis 1-2; (6) Ezekiel 16:49-51 and 18:10-13 and the use of the singular תּוֹעֵבָה serve as metonymy and is synonymous with the homosexuality attributed to Sodom and Gomorrah.
5. Look for analogues in the Ancient Near Eastern literature:	An examination of the Ancient Near Eastern analogues of the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Hittites, and Canaanites revealed that ancient Israel alone had the most detailed set of sexual proscriptions in the Ancient Near Eastern world. Except for MAL §19 and §20, and a Hittite law proscribing father/son incest, the surrounding Ancient Near Eastern world did not have many controls to curb erotic tendencies beyond the promotion of marriage for raising children and heirs. The fertility religion of the day further encouraged sexual licence.
6. Determine the unique differences between the original audience and the interpreter:	There are significant differences between current western culture and those of the Ancient Near East. There is no theocracy today, God is not present with the Church as he was with ancient Israel, fertility religion is not common place in the secular west, and most westerners do not live in an agronomic household situation. The present *Sitz im Leben* is different in almost every respect except that this is still a post-Genesis 3 world with the certainty of human depravity and the fall still prevalent. Then, as now, sinful creatures still look for innovative ways to find autonomous expression for God's creation ordinance of gender distinction, covenantal marriage, and sexual liberties beyond those parameters. One only needs to consult the secular culture and worldview with its obsession with erotic liberties to see the more things change, the more they remain the same.

7. Examine the social and cultural importance of the law:	All of the sexual proscriptions should be seen in the context of holiness (Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26) and what it means to be holy in the sight of God and in the presence of those to whom they are to serve as light. Leviticus 18 is structured as a covenant within a covenant and the message is one of Israel's distinction as a nation in the realm of sexuality. Their livelihood as a nation was in direct proportion to the stability of their homes i.e., households. In this, they were not to in any way resemble the pagan nations, lest God remove them from the land. This included every form of homosexuality.
8. Maintain the original objective for the law before principlizing:	God morally abhors any form of male homosexuality among his covenant people as it is a direct violation of his creation ordinance. By way of implication, this includes lesbian homoerotic behaviour.
9. Correlate the principle to the New Testament teaching or closest analogue:	See Chapter 5 for a brief synopsis of homosexuality: Mt 5:17ff.; 19:4-6; Mk 10:2-11; Mk 7:19-21; Rm 1:26-28; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Tm 1:8-10; Heb 13:4; Jude 6-8; Rv 21:8. An investigation of the New Testament emphasizes that God's abhorrence for sexual distortion of any kind beyond that given in Genesis 1-2 is still an "abomination" in any age. What changes is how sexual violation is dealt with in the church. The church is not under the Mosaic Covenant, it is non-nationalistic, and it is not theocratic. The primary means for dealing with homosexuality in the New Testament economy are the gospel and church discipline for those professing members who fall into such sin.
10. Seek to apply the extracted principle to the modern setting in accordance with 2 Timothy 3:16-17:	God is consistently opposed to homosexual acts all throughout the Bible: (1) what does this teach one about God? He is eternally holy and immutable — the God of creation has not changed his mind since his creation ordinance on the same, even in view of a post-Genesis 3 world; (2) is there an exhortation to heed? Don't commit acts of homosexuality, or commit any other sexual deviation for that matter. Seek repentance in instances where violation has occurred; (3) is there a correction or encouragement? Yes, God's grace is still greater than any one human's sin, so those who are trapped in this sin can find his grace sufficient for them; (4) how should one seek to live as a Christian in this present world of pansexuality? Pursue the holiness and purity of God in regard to one's own sexuality. Positively focus on the biblical standard for such instead of entertaining the standard of the sexualized culture prevalent today. Seek to be counter-cultural and distinct in this area of Christianity.
Conclusion: God has not changed his mind on sexual immorality to include homosexuality. Rather, according to Christ, God's sexual prohibitions were intensified with his Son's fulfilment of the Mosaic law. The essence of God's command is still the same even if the way in which it is applied (form) is different: The church is not mandated with the death penalty, but armed with the gospel instead. There is something worse than physical death itself — eternal death. Therefore, the gospel of Jesus Christ is vital in confronting and warning about sexual sin of any nature. It must be remembered that homosexuality is a particular manifestation of the fallen nature that all have received at conception. To this end, homosexuality is a symptom of the sin nature — it is the effect, not the cause. To address the fruit of sin, first address the root with the gospel of Jesus Christ. For those who repent, God's grace is abundantly available. But for the impenitent, the warning in Revelation 21:8 remains.	

4.9 Conclusion

The summary of this chapter is well illustrated by Walton (1994:163), who reminds readers that through Christ the Old Covenant "relationship is redefined". As Walton describes it, through Christ, the map has been replaced with the guide. The Old Testament law still has relevance for the modern-day Christian, but only as it reappropriated through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant provisions he provides.

Some may mock and scoff[55] at God's holy will regarding sexual morality by creatively twisting Levitical law.[56] In so doing, they evidence an impoverished understanding of the creational foundation, nature, and purpose of God's holy law as it is expressed covenantally. All of this is critical for grasping the New Testament significance of the law as it finds fulfilment in the atoning death of Christ. As a result of his supreme sacrifice, Christ not only bears the penalty and the curse of the law, he serves as the culmination of the law by establishing his own righteousness. Thus, Christ now serves as the filter through which the Mosaic law must be applied in a new dispensation.

The conclusion is that sexual distortion of any kind, whether specifically mentioned or not, is "a central existential category of ongoing concern and godly purpose" (Seitz, 2000:187). From Genesis to Revelation, the message is one of continuity — sexual deviation from the creation norm is always a violation of God's holy, eternal, and immutable will. Even in a post-cross world, adultery is still condemned by God, as is homosexuality. These remain abiding offenses to God at all times, all places, and by all people. But discontinuity is witnessed in how sexual sins like adultery and homosexuality are now addressed in a New Covenant setting. Jesus still condemned the adultery of the woman in John 8:1-11, but he stressed to her "Go, and ***sin no***

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[55] See the instance of the Dr Laura letter shared at the beginning of this chapter.

[56] Gagnon (2012:63) convincingly argues against a one-to-one comparison between homosexuality and some of the boundary marking laws: "The common comparison in homosexualist circles between the laws against male homosexual practice in the Holiness Code on the one hand and the laws against cloth mixtures (see Lev. 19:19) and against sex with a menstruating woman (see Lev. 18:19; 20:18) on the other hand fails because it prefers distant analogues over close analogues. For the prohibitions of adultery (see Lev. 18:20; 20:10), bestiality (see Lev. 18:23; 20:15–16), and especially adult incest (see Lev. 18:6–18; 20:11–12, 14, 17, 19–21) have more points of close correspondence with the prohibition of homosexual practice. They are all (a) forms of sexual behaviour (b) proscribed (c) pervasively within both Testaments, (d) absolutely and (e) severely. Contrast this with the attempted comparison of the laws against cloth mixtures and the intercourse with a menstruating woman … There is no comparison as regards *the severity of the offense*. The penalty for wearing a garment made of two different kinds of cloth was probably only the destruction of the garment (cf. Deut. 22:9–11 where the penalty for sowing one's vineyard with two different kinds of seed is merely the forfeiting of the yield). Although the Levitical Holiness Code treats sex with a menstruating woman as a serious offense, even it categorizes such intercourse as a 'second-tier offense' that does not incur capital sentencing (see Lev. 20:18)."

more."[57] The message is profoundly simple, forgiveness is abundant for those who confess and forsake their sexual transgressions.

In the words of Christopher (2009:83): "The law of Christ ensures that moral unity exists between the Old Testament and New Testament. It has always been wrong to murder, rape, steal, to have sexual relations with an animal, to commit adultery, and to commit homosexual acts. God's standard of righteousness has never been altered, but these righteous demands were met by Christ."

[57] Emphasis added by the author.

5 HOMOSEXUALITY IN LIGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In light of the preceding treatment of same-sex relationships and homosexual activity in Chapter 3, and the subsequent discussion on a method for bridging the Old Testament treatment of the subject to the New Testament (Chapter 4), it is now necessary to briefly examine the New Testament perspective of homosexuality in light of the Old. It is not the purpose of this chapter to attempt an exhaustive evaluation of the New Testament understanding of homosexuality. Instead, it is the objective here to offer a synopsis of what the New Testament does and does not say about homosexuality. Therefore, in an effort to investigate the New Testament perspective on homosexuality, what follows will consider what Jesus, Paul, and Jude had to say regarding sexual ethics in general, and homosexuality specifically. In each instance, the context of each text will be summarized before examining the key lexical and grammatical aspects that contribute to the interpretation of the considered passage. Then a summary assessment for each section will briefly evaluate the selective exegetical information.

5.1 Jesus' assessment of homosexuality

The question is often asked what Jesus thought of homosexuality. In reference to homosexuality, what would Jesus do? What did Jesus teach about homosexuality, if anything? It is a common for many modern interpreters to respond to the question by saying "Nothing". Although it is true that Jesus never directly or explicitly addressed the issue of homosexuality, it is equally true that Jesus did address the issue of marriage and sexuality. Both marriage and sexuality in general have bearing on the discussion at hand and the questions proffered. By examining synoptic accounts in Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:2-11, and Mark 7:19-21 modern-day interpreters can have confidence in what Jesus would say about any sexual deviation because of the Torah's teaching regarding human sexuality. Ultimately, as the Markan account (7:19-21) demonstrates, all sexual deviation and distortion finds its impetus in the sinful human heart, which serves as "the source of human action" (Lane, 1974:256).

5.1.1 Context: Jesus affirms the creation ordinance Matthew 19:4-6

Rather than reducing the Old Testament standard for sexual ethics, Jesus, instead, intensifies the Old Testament moral code on sexuality. This is evident in Matthew 5 when Jesus emphasizes the internal attitude as a precursor to the actual action. As Gagnon (2012:74) explains it, the sexual ethic of Jesus is not one of greater sexual liberty. On the contrary, Jesus fortifies sexual restrictions by focusing on the inner desires of sinful man as the basis for sexual immorality.

In Matthew 19:4-6 (cf. Mk 10:2-11) Jesus, in addressing the issue of divorce and the Mosaic law, turns the argument back to creation itself.[1] He shrewdly avoids picking sides in what was a debate amongst 1st-century Jews. What Jesus did do is to go back to the original creation intent for marriage by referencing Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. By citing this primal event, Jesus relocates the debate regarding divorce back to pre-fall creation. In so doing he underscores the essential divine givens related to marriage and human sexuality.

5.1.2 Lexical and grammatical observations from Matthew 19:4-6

In direct relationship to the context of Matthew 19:4-6, the lexical and grammatical clues take their cue from the creation account he referenced. Jesus' syntagmatic usage here emphasizes three primary characteristics for marriage as God intended in perpetuity:

- Genesis 1:27 highlights the absolute necessity for gender distinction "male and female".[2] The accent here concentrates on gender complementarity that each sex brings to the marriage (Bloomberg, 1992:290). Whatever else marriage is, it must embrace the non-negotiable of gender dissimilarity. This, according to Jesus, is foundational to marriage, and by extension, sexuality. This idea is strengthened when Jesus reminds his hearers' ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς[3] "male and female He made them" (Hagner, 1998:548), which corresponds to the Septuagint's rendering of Genesis 1:27.

- In addressing the Pharisees, Jesus reiterates the absolute numerical requirement for only two people. The divine mathematical formula is that when gender distinction is present, two equals one in a covenant commitment before God. Gagnon (2012:73)

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[1] The issue at stake in Matthew 19:1-6 is in relation to the two various Jewish schools of thought on the matter of divorce: Shammai and Hillel (Morris, 1992:480). According to Carson (2010:466), the Shammai school of interpreters saw "gross indecency, although not necessarily adultery" as the only reason for divorce. Whereas the Hillel school greatly "extended the meaning beyond sin to all manner of real or imagined offenses, including an improperly cooked meal." Instead of taking either side, Jesus surprised both factions by reaching back beyond the fall itself to creation and God's original intent as if to say that what "is" supposes the "ought" of human accountability.

[2] In the Decalogue is found the assumption of the male/female distinction. This prerequisite in sexual relationships is found in the fifth command for children to honour their fathers and mothers. In Matthew 19:1-6 Jesus evidences the same essential understanding found in the Torah (Gagnon, 2012:75).

[3] The Hebrew terms for "male" and "female" used in Genesis 1:27 are זָכָר (male) and נְקֵבָה (female) and appear a number of times together to refer to the distinct gender of the species. The same pattern is found in the Noahide account of the flood in Genesis 6:19; 7:3, 9, 16. Gagnon (2012:74) says that the two gender terms are linked to emphasize that when taken together, they comprise a natural numerical pair. It is also noteworthy that Romans 1:26-27 uses the same Greek terms for "male" and "female" identifying the terms with a link to creation and Genesis 1:27.

notes that the two integrated complementary partners comprise a sexual whole i.e., a unit of one. This makes any additional members undesirable.

- In Matthew 19:6 Jesus stresses the necessity of marital permanence (monogamy) by citing Genesis 2:24. When a man leaves his father and mother he is to "decisively" (Morris, 1992:481) form a new priority relationship with his wife. Even here, there is an implied headship related to his role in this new priority relationship, which is a further indication of the complementarian nature of the marital relation. This results in an earthly bond shared by no other relational combination known to humanity. Here in Matthew 19:6 (cf. Gn 2:24) the "one flesh" is a reference to the sexual act itself which serves to unite the couple "in a more intimate fashion" (Morris, 1992:481). As Carson (2010:466) describes it, "… the 'one flesh' in every marriage, between a man and a woman is a re-enactment of and testimony to the very structure of humanity as God created it". For this reason, the identity shared by the married couple is to be "forever" until the separation of death (Turner, 2005:246).

5.1.3 Summary of Matthew 19:4-6

Because marriage is grounded in creation, it is critical to maintain these three essential characteristics: gender distinction, the numerical quantity of only 2 persons, and matrimonial permanence.[4] In connection with this, there are two concluding insights which strengthen the argument above: (1) In his discussion and appeal to the creation ordinance, Jesus strongly focuses "on the God-ordained unity of the couple, not the kind of adultery" (Carson, 2010:466); (2) Jesus used a Jewish form of exegetical argumentation that reaches back to the beginning and is, therefore, "weightier" than the debate about which ancient rabbinic school, Shammai or Hillel, was right about the lawful reason(s) for divorce. One cannot go back any further than creation to find precepts that outline human responsibility (Carson, 2010:466; Luz, 2001:489; Morris, 1992:480-481).[5]

[4] It is here that the pro-gay advocates are at odds to explain why it is that the gender-distinction requirement is not a prerequisite, but the requirement for the numerical limit and monogamy is still inforce and to be applied. If gender dissimilarity is no longer observed, then why limit marriage to only two people? Why stress the importance of monogamy. If God's will has evolved on the one, why do pro-gay interpreters still insist on maintaining the other divine characteristics?

[5] Carson (2010:466) cites Pauline example of this kind of Jewish exegetical logic as Paul appeals to the weightier issue by going back to the beginning of the Abrahamic covenant in Galatians 3:15-18.

Therefore, in reaffirming the divine creational ordinance for marriage, Jesus said all that ever needed to be said on the subject and its inextricably linked theme of human sexuality. Simply said, any deviation from this bedrock precept results in a departure from God's will and is a distortion of the Creator's original intent, even in a fallen world.[6] In this, homosexuality is only one of a myriad of differing sexual restrictions that finds proscription in the very beginning itself.[7]

5.2 Jesus and his general sexual prohibition

While responding to the criticism from the Pharisees about the efficacy of ritually washing one's hands before eating, Jesus used the opportunity to authoritatively take the discussion to another level by addressing the real source of human defilement — the sinful human heart (Mk 7:14-23). Just as he did in Matthew 5, when he intensified the demands of the law, here Jesus elevates the matter by locating defilement to a human internal state of being. He here identifies the source of all human defilement and impurity by implicating the human heart (Kent, 2005:101; Lane, 1974:256-257). In the process of addressing matters of the heart, Jesus declared all foods clean thereby terminating Jewish dietary laws.[8]

5.2.1 Context of Mark 7:19-23

In the context of Mark 7, the Jews of the 1st-century era had conflated ritual taboos with moral evil (Kent, 2005:101). Yet, as Kent (2005:101) explains, "True defilement is spiritual and moral. It proceeds from the inner being of man, which is sinful by nature". Of this Jeremiah (17:9) well spoke, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" For this reason, Jesus traces the vestiges of impurity and unholy behaviour to an unclean human heart (Kent, 2005:101).

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[6] *Contra* Furnish, who responds to Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:2-11 by saying that "Jesus is only addressing divorce, not homosexuality." Therefore, he concludes that Jesus' silence on the matter means that homosexuality is "was not a matter of special concern" for the Lord (Furnish, 1994:23). By the same canons of logic then, there are many sexual distortions Jesus never mentioned, so, by Furnish's reasoning, if Jesus didn't explicitly mention it, then it must not be an area of any significant concern. Furnish also ignores the overarching prohibition on "fornications" from Mark 7:21. It is true that Jesus focuses specifically on divorce in Matthew 19:4-6, but his cosmological argument from creation implies that any sexual departure from the creation norm is a violation of God's original design and intent.

[7] In Matthew 19:9-11 Jesus draws a comparison between believers who remain single and celibate with those who were "born eunuchs". So, as Gagnon (2012:76-77) observes, if the "born eunuchs" include those who have a sexual attraction for other men, but not women, then "Jesus is presuming that homosexual orientated men must remain celibate because they cannot conform their desires to the only arrangement for marriage that God ordains."

[8] In this context Gagnon (2012:75) insightfully comments that one should not compare sex laws with food laws. It is common practice for some Christians to advocate homosexuality by comparing sex laws to food laws, which is a *non-sequitur*.

5.2.2 Lexical and grammatical observations for Mark 7:19-23

Because the human heart serves as the beachhead for defilement, Jesus qualifies his exposition with the phrase "evil thoughts"[9] (Mk. 7:21) before delineating the sinful actions that follow. What follows stems from the defiled thought processes of sinful humanity (Hiebert, 1994:204; Wessel & Strauss, 2010:804). Of the 12 terms that follow the "evil thoughts" segue, the first six terms are all plural actions, while the second set of six are singular attitudes (Edwards, 2002:214). The plural actions — adulteries, fornications, murders etc. — are all "successive acts of these different evils" (Hiebert, 1994:204).

The significance of this passage is that three of the twelve terms Jesus features are directly related to sexual ethics: πορνεία (fornications), μοιχεία (adulteries), and ἀσέλγεια (sensuality). The first two expressions reference the sinful actions that flow from the "evil thoughts", while the third lexeme identifies an internal disposition of the heart.

The term πορνεία (fornications) serves as a broad category marker[10] for all acts of sexual immorality — any sexual act or practice that is located outside of the biblically defined marriage relationship found in the creation account (Brooks, 1991:119; Edwards, 2002:214; Hiebert, 1994:204; Lane, 1974:257). This broad category most certainly includes all sexual distortions that transgress the boundaries established in Genesis 1 and 2. Homosexuality is one of any number of proscribed distortions embraced by this word.

The word choice μοιχεία (adulteries), is specific vocabulary that distinguishes it from πορνεία in that it only demarcates illicit sexual activity beyond the bounds of one's own marriage (Hiebert, 1994:204; Wessel & Strauss, 2010:804). When juxtaposed with πορνεία, μοιχεία is designated as particularly heinous. Possibly this is because it was the more common transgression in 1st-century Palestine.

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[9] Bock describes the "evil thoughts" as "evil devising" or "thoughts" that include "pondering" (2005:459). As Wessel and Strauss explain it: "'Evil thoughts' stand first, which suggests that what follows arises from them" (2010:804).

[10] DBLSD defines the word as "sexual sin of general kind, that includes many different behaviors" (4514): Also see BDAG (2000:854) and Louw and Nida (1996:770). Edwards describes πορνεία as a "reference to a variety of sexually illicit practices, including adultery, fornication, prostitution, and homosexuality". He then links πορνεία to the Jewish understanding of the Torah and the LXX's occurrences of the word used for any sexual practice outside of the marriage bond. Significantly, Edwards (2002:214) maintains, "This sense is retained and intensified in the New Testament, which is characterized by an unconditional repudiation of all extramarital and unnatural intercourse". This would correlate with Jesus' intensification of sexual ethics in the gospels.

The third direct term[11] Jesus invoked to underscore sexual defilement forms part of the second set of lexemes used to describe attitudes, not actions. The term Jesus used is ἀσέλγεια (sensuality). It is a word that is variously translated by biblical translators: "lewdness" (*New international version*), "licentiousness" (*Revised standard version* and *New revised standard version*), and "sensuality" (*New American standard Bible*). Swanson (1997:816) defines ἀσέλγεια as "debauchery", "licentiousness", "lewdness" which is described as "unrestrained in moral attitudes and behaviors".[12] In like manner, Robertson (1930:325) well summarizes the meaning as "unrestrained sex instinct" which emphasizes the dispositional aspect of the word, giving rise to the fornication and adultery mentioned prior.

5.2.3 Summary of Jesus' evaluation of homosexuality

Although it is true Jesus never explicitly commented on homosexuality specifically, he clearly limited all sexual activity to the exclusive confines of a creationally ordained definition of marriage (Mt 19:1-6; Mk 10:2-11). The import of what Christ taught emphasized the confines of the human heart (Mk 7:19-23). This is in the context of what it means to love God and loving one's neighbour as oneself (Bock, 2005:461). The motive for love's external compliance, according to Jesus, resides in the interior recesses of the human heart. The foundation for all purity, morality, and holy living is first internal before it is ever external. So, as Edwards (2002:214) concludes, only "Jesus can produce the inner transformation that the law requires but cannot effect".

Consequently, in answer to the question "Homosexuality: What would Jesus Do?" the explicit statements of what Jesus did say on the related matters of marriage and human sexuality are not obscure. To claim that Jesus would endorse homosexuality and its corollary, same-sex marriage, is to fly in the face of the obvious statements Jesus did make. The argument from silence is a gateway for all other sexual distortions and deviancies beyond homosexuality itself. This is a gateway that Jesus exhortatively shut and locked when he reaffirmed the creation ordinance for marriage as God's will even in the aftermath of the fall. Undoubtedly, Jesus considered the creation account as paradigmatic and precedent setting. That sexual distortion exists is only another reminder of the comprehensive and constitutional impact of the fall on the human heart, and the need for redeeming grace.

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[11] Both Wessel and Strauss (2010:804) and Hiebert (1994:204) suggest that the Greek word πλεονεξία translated "greed" or "covetousness" may have implied sexual overtones. Of this, Hiebert (1994:205) remarks it is "unrestrained licentiousness which unblushingly plunges into moral debauchery in open defiance of public opinion".

[12] Because DBLSD does not contain page numbers in the Logos version, the number 816 is a citation designation.

5.3 Paul's assessment of homosexuality

If the biblical evidence from the gospels strongly suggests that Jesus disapproved of homosexuality, then the next logical question is "What was Paul's evaluation of same-sex relations?" The primary passages that answer the question are found in Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and 1Timothy 1:9-10. Other passages that deal more generally with sexuality (1 Th 4:1-8) could be consulted. But in the interest of brevity this dissertation will seek to answer the question by referencing the three primary passages as they deal more directly with the issue of homosexuality.

5.3.1 Paul, Romans, and homosexuality

Romans 1:24-27 is thought to be one of the most vital passages for an evaluation of sexual ethics in the New Testament, especially as it relates to homosexuality (Hays, 1994:7).[13] Pro-gay advocate Matthew Vine's acknowledges the import of Romans 1:24-27 in this discussion when he remarked that the words of Romans 1 have long haunted gay people (2014:95). For this reason, possibly, some pro-gay scholars (Nortje-Meyer, 2005:175) disparage Paul's credentials and authority. In response to such assessments of Paul, those like Caragounis (2007:59) and Ukleja (1983:354) counter these *ad hoc* indictments with a reminder of Paul's impressive resume.[14] It is certain that Romans 1:24-27 proves daunting for pro-gay proponents, but this perception should be viewed in light of God's available grace.

5.3.1.1 The context of Romans 1:18-32

The overarching theme for Romans 1:18-3:20 is the rebellion of humanity against God as evidenced by the pagan, the moralist, and the religionist. The summation is that all are constitutionally and irrevocably sinful and deserving of God's wrath. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul delineates the pagan's plight as humanity is in complete revolt against God's will, God's law, and God's creation order (Caragounis, 2007:63). In this context, people have access to the truth of God through his objective creation (general revelation), but because of human rebellion, humanity suppresses that which is clearly seen holding the truth in unrighteousness

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[13] For a more thorough and detailed treatment of Paul's mention of homosexuality in Romans 1 this writer recommends five very good resources: (1) Botha , 2001:1-115; (2) Gagnon, 2001:229-303; (3) Hays, 1986:184-215; (4) Oden, 2003:85-96; (5) Schmidt, 1995:64-85.

[14] In response to whether or not Paul had some understanding of constitutionally conditioned homosexuality and the various kinds of homosexuality known and practiced in the ancient world, Ukleja (1983:354) responds: "As far as Paul's knowledge of such sins is concerned, it must be remembered that Tarsus was the third intellectual city in the world … Paul grew up there and would have learned about the Graeco-Roman world along with its assorted philosophies and practices … He would have been familiar with the view among certain Greeks that homosexuality was a highly regarded form of love. This is important to consider when analyzing Paul's inspired writings on this subject." Caragounis (2007:59) echoes the same essential sentiments when he contends that Paul, because of his upbringing, was familiar with every form of homosexuality practiced and discussed in antiquity, "It is unconvincing to argue otherwise".

(Caragounis, 2007:64; Moo, 2002:256-257). Paul's diagnosis of the pagan's plight is that the human condition is "disordered" (Hays, 1994:7). It is for this reason that humanity refuses to honour God as Creator, exhibiting an implacable ingratitude. On this basis, God actively gives them over (Rm 1:24, 26, 28) to the error of their way.

In this contextual framework, homosexuality, in both its female and male forms (1:26-27), should be seen not as the reason for God's wrath, but rather as a direct consequence of God's decision to give humanity over to the natural consequences of their own sinful desires (Botha & Van Rensburg, 2004:45; Hays, 1986:190; Hays, 1994:8; Hays, 1996:388; Jewett, 2007:173; Malick, 1993a:338). As a direct result of holding the truth of God in unrighteousness (1:19-23), all that follows (1:26-32) serves as symptomatic of the underlying sickness of humanity as a whole (Hays, 1994:8; Hays, 1996:388), with homosexuality (1:26-27) graphically serving as an image of God's wrath for those who distort his created order (Hays, 1994:8). The *prima facie* evidence of sexual distortion speaks to humanity's hamartiological dislocation and the associated worldview which falsifies God's created order. In Romans 1:26-27, Paul illustrates humanity's "tragic confusion" and "alienation from God the Creator" (Hays, 1994:9) through the image of homosexuality in all of its forms (Hays, 1994:9).[15]

Woven into this Romans 1 fabric is Paul's strong reliance upon the creation motif of Genesis 1, with images and allusions that reach back to the creation story itself (Botha & van Rensburg, 2004:43; Burk, 2014:49; Gagnon, 2012:109; Loader, 2012:324; Schreiner, 2006:62). While there are no direct citations, Malick states that the terminology reaches back to creation, rather than merely making use of the categories of Hellenistic Judaism (1993:331).[16] This surely lends credence to the argument that the activities Paul underscores in Romans 1:26-27 are in direct contradistinction to creative order.

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[15] Just as the attempted homosexual gang rape in Sodom and Gomorrah served to illustrate the part for the whole debauchery, in much the same way Paul uses the part, homosexuality, to illustrate the many symptoms of those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Such a graphic illustration functions to show extreme terminus for a society that forgets God. In this way, the homosexuality of Romans 1:26-27 is a kind of synecdoche which uses the striking images of homosexuality to highlight the lamentable results of rebelling against God.

[16] Hays (1996:404-405) cites four reasons for why he thinks Romans one has strong and significant ties to the creation account: (1) while Paul does not explicitly cite from Genesis 1-3, there is an explicit reference in Romans 1:20. No Jewish reader could have read this without thinking of creation; (2) the language used in Romans 1:23 has echoes of Genesis 1:26-28. As God's image bearers in God's likeness they were given direct dominion over the creatures of the air, land, and sea. The folly of idolatry ultimately produces an ironic inversion of this; (3) the terminology θῆλυ (female) and ἄρσην (male) are used respectively in Romans 1:26-27. This is LXX terminology that was used in the LXX's translation of Genesis 1:26-28 and is reminiscent of the discussion of Footnote 3 of this chapter under the discussion of Matthew 19:4-6 and the creation terminology of Jesus; (4) add to all of this the contextual citations of Abraham and Adam in Romans 4 and 5. Also see Loader (2010:27).

Closely linked to Paul's reference to creation, is his allusion to the Levitical texts under discussion in this study — Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (Botha & Van Rensburg, 2004:45; DeYoung, 2000:157, 161; Hays, 1986:208; Hays, 1996:394; Jewett, 2007:179; Loader, 2010:34; Loader 2012:314-315, 322).[17] The suggestion of such a connection is so compelling that pro-gay lesbian, Brooten (1996:277-278), admits such a probability. For his part, Loader (2012:322) believes "it is inconceivable that he [Paul] would approve of any same-sex acts, if, as we must assume, he affirmed the prohibitions of Lev. 18:22; 20:13 as fellow Jews of his time understood them".[18] In view of this, it is not hermeneutically tenable to assume that Paul relied primarily on the Graeco-Roman context of the day to the "near exclusion of his Jewish identity" (Burk, 2014:52), as some pro-gay interpreters contend.

One final contextual note important for this evaluation of Romans 1:26-27 is to understand that the ancients of Paul's period had some understanding of homosexuality as an innate disposition which was reflected in a variety of same-sex expressions, not to be solely confined to that of pederasty or prostitution (Brooten, 1996:157-159, 161-171; Caragounis, 2007:28-60; DeYoung, 2015; Hubbard, 2003:1-513; Wright, 2004).[19] In support of this often neglected thesis, DeYoung (2015) adds that, "… homosexual behavior was not reducible to any single pattern, and moral judgment did not fall into neat categories." Neither can homosexuality "be reduced to only man-boy varieties … Every kind of homosexuality was known in the 1st Century … Nascent ideas about orientation were not unknown in the Graeco-Roman era." In N.T. Wright's estimation, "They knew the whole range of options there" (Allen, 2004).[20] Thus, the modern contention that

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[17] Loader (2012:314) makes the observation that the homosexuality Paul referenced in Romans 1 included both the attitude and actions, not just simply the homosexual activity. Hays (1994:9) disagrees, in part, when he states that neither Paul nor anyone else in antiquity "had a concept of sexual orientation". Based on the arguments that follow, it does appear that the ancients had some notion of orientation in spite of Hays denial of such. It appears that Hays did not duly consult the historical and literary evidence amassed from that period — see Footnote 20. While the ancients did not express their recognition of a "sexual orientation" the same as understood today, this does not mean they were ignorant of such.

[18] Jewett (2007:179) argues that the clause in 1:27 "males committing unseemly acts with males" is in reference to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, which further indicates that Romans 1:27 is prohibiting more than just exploitative or pederastic acts of homosexuality. Furthermore, Hays (1996:394) contends that Romans 1:32 and its reference to the death penalty is an allusion to Leviticus 20:13. While this is not as obvious as Jewett's insight, it does invite further investigation. In his book *Paul, Scripture, & ethics: a study of 1 Corinthians 5-7*, Rosner (1999:51) sees the same link between Leviticus 20 and Romans 1:18-32. He cites similarities between the two vice lists. Like Jewett, Rosner finds the appeal to the death sentence in Romans 1:32 "reminiscent of Leviticus 20." It is hard to believe that the ethics of a pivotal portion of the Torah, like Leviticus 18-20, had no influence upon Paul's thinking even if such influence was indirect.

[19] Caragounis (2007:28-60) helpfully works through some primary extra-biblical literature of the Graeco-Roman period detailing primarily the Greek understanding and practice of homosexuality from 400 BCE to 100 CE making many salient points in his commentary of that era.

[20] Hubbard's primary source book, *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome*, is most instructive here. Relying upon ancient extra-biblical writings of the philosophers and historians of the Graeco-Roman era, to include the 1st Century, Hubbard concludes: "The coincidence of such severity on the part of moralistic writers with flagrant and

the ancients had absolutely no concept or understanding of mutually loving, committed, and consensual same-sex relationships does not harmonize with the historical evidence. It is at this juncture that pro-gay proponents "confuse terminology over substance" (Caragounis, 2007:28). Just because the ancient Greeks and Romans did not use modern terminology is not to imply they "were ignorant of this itself" (Caragounis, 2007:28). Neither is the cultural gap between the ancients and present-day modernity as impassable as many have portrayed (Caragounis, 2007:93; DeYoung, 2015). So, in all likelihood, Paul was acquainted with an ancient version of sexual orientation and the many forms of homosexuality that were prevalent in the 1st Century (Allen, 2004; Loader, 2012:323).[21] This would certainly influence Paul's understanding of the kind of homosexuality he referenced in Romans 1:26-27.

5.3.1.2 Romans 1:24-27 lexical and grammatical considerations

Given that this is not an extensive treatment of the Roman's passage, the lexical and grammatical observations will be limited in number and scope. After examining three primary lexical terms in Romans 1:24-27, then four of the pertinent grammatical and syntactical observations will be presented before summarizing this principal text.

One of the reoccurring terms of interest in the Romans 1:23-27 corpus is the word "exchanged", used in 1:23, 25, and 26. The lemma in 1:23 is ἀλλάσσω which simply means "substitute" (Louw & Nida, 1996:573), while the other two uses in 1:25 and 26 undergo intensification through compounding the term into μεταλλάσσω. First the glory of God is downgraded which is followed by the truth of God being exchanged for the lie[22] (Rm 1:25). This then leads to the third

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open display of every form of homosexual behavior by Nero and other practitioners indicates a culture in which attitudes about this issue increasingly defined one's ideological and moral position. In other words, homosexuality in this era may have ceased to be merely another practice of personal pleasure and began to be viewed as an essential and central category of personal identity, exclusive of and antithetical to heterosexual orientation" (Hubbard, 2003:386). Commenting in a 2004 interview, N.T. Wright (Allen, 2004), who is a classicist, similarly concludes: "As a classicist, I have to say that when I read Plato's *Symposium*, or when I read the accounts from the early Roman empire of the practice of homosexuality, then it seems to me they knew just as much about it as we do. In particular, a point which is often missed, they knew a great deal about what people today would regard as longer-term, reasonably stable relations between two people of the same gender. This is not a modern invention, it's already there in Plato. The idea that in Paul's today it was always a matter of exploitation of younger men by older men or whatever … of course there was plenty of that then, as there is today, but it was by no means the only thing. They knew about the whole range of options there. Indeed, in the modern world that isn't an invention of the 20th century either. If you read the recent literature, for example Graham Robb's book *Strangers*, which is an account of homosexual love in the 19th century, it offers an interesting account of all kinds of different expressions and awarenesses and phenomena. I think we have been conned by Michel Foucault into thinking that this is all a new phenomena."

[21] Loader (2012:323-324) does warn against the danger of anachronistically reading "modern theories" back into Paul's world, which is precisely what many pro-gay theologians do in order to exploit the cultural gap. This is sage advice for both sides of this debate.

[22] In Romans 1:25 the definite article is used with "lie" so that it should read "the lie" not "a lie" (Jewett, 2007:170; Morris, 1988:90; Mounce, 1995:81). Jewett (2007:170) relates "the lie" back to creation and Genesis 3:5 which

exchange (Rm 1:26) of substituting natural affections for those which are unnatural, leading to lesbianism and male homosexuality. There is a pathological progression of substitution taking place here. The development intensifies in verse 25. This, in Jewett's (2007:170) opinion, indicates "a more 'odious' form of sin". When worship is perverted it eventuates in a perversion of sexuality, all of which is illustrated in Romans 1:26-27 (Botha & Van Rensburg, 2004:40). Sexual union presupposes sexual differentiation, but it is through this sequence of exchanges this presupposition is transvalued into sexual sameness.[23] All of which emphasizes the results of suppressing the truth of God in unrighteousness and the subsequent exchanges that spiral into the judgment of homosexuality.[24]

The triple usage of the Greek lemma παραδίδωμι (Rm 1:24, 26, and 28) "given over"[25] describes the judicial act of God whereby he actively withdraws his restraining force from sinful humanity (Caragounis, 2007:66; Malick, 1993a:334-335; Ukleja, 1983:355). This action has been explained as a "technical expression for the police or courts turning someone over to official custody for the purpose of punishment" (Jewett, 2007:167). The important facet of this divine deliverance over to one's sin is that it is active in nature with God as the active agent (Botha & van Rensburg, 2004:41). Moo (1996a:110-111) vividly depicts God's active agency in giving rebels over as more than merely letting the boat go down stream. Rather, God gives the boat a push toward the roar of the rapids.[26] This sovereign abandonment to humanity's sinful consequences actively promotes human self-glorification (Rm 1:24), which leads to human self-gratification (Rm 1:26), or "degrading passions". Ultimately, this pattern culminates in human self-destruction (Rm 1:28), which sees humanity's thinking processes rendered morally

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would serve as the antecedent act in the garden setting. Given the creation context in this passage this is a possibility, but it is difficult to be conclusive.

[23] The sequence of exchanges "forges a strong rhetorical link between the rebellion against God and the shameless acts (Rm 1:27) which evidence the consequences of rebellion" (Hays, 1986:192). It is also important to note that the context in which these exchanges take place is not referring to individual life choices. Instead, the context is one in which the entire pagan world in its unredeemed depravity is duly characterized (Hays, 1996:388).

[24] One pro-gay scholar honestly concludes that "Paul used the word 'exchanged' to indicate that people knew the natural sexual order of the universe and left it behind … I see Paul condemning all forms of homoeroticism as the unnatural acts of people who had turned away from God" (Brooten, 1996:244).

[25] The 1st aorist, active, indicative, 3rd person singular of this verb is further indication of God's active and direct abandonment of rebellious humanity to their sin. Much like when God hardened Pharaoh's heart in Exodus before the first Passover.

[26] Malick (1993a:334-335) details three differing views of the action of the giving over by God: (1) there is a permissive sense where the action of God is more in the sense of permission where God allows humanity to fall further into their sin as retribution; (2) there is a privative sense wherein God withdraws his restraining hand from evil; (3) then there is the active judicial sense where God gave humanity over to retributive vengeance. This is the true sense of the verb. Mounce (1995:80) is one conservative scholar who takes the verb in a more passive sense. He maintains that that the wrath of God is passive, allowing the recipients to go their own way. But this fails to convey the full force of the verb.

disqualified (Malick, 1993a:335). Put another way, verse 28 warns the pagan of a mind-set that is morally cauterized and rendered insensate. This active handing over further stresses the nature of the punishment is the sin itself. In other words, the sin of homosexuality is its own anti-reward for truth suppression and exchanging the truth of God for the lie (Hays, 1996:388). Homosexuality is not the reason for the wrath of God, it is the wrath of God.

The final lexeme to be considered relates to Romans 1:26 and the use of "natural function for that which unnatural". Paul uses the adjective φυσικός to describe "natural function" while the phrase παρὰ φύσιν describes that which is "unnatural". Although there are a number of pro-gay renderings of "unnatural", one of the more prominent positions has been that of Boswell (1981:109-111) who claims that what Paul "derogates are homosexual acts committed by apparently heterosexual persons" (Boswell, 1981:109). In order arrive at such a conclusion, Boswell (1981:110) must define παρὰ φύσιν "against nature" as "a matter of the character of some person, or group of persons …" as opposed to viewing Paul's use of "nature" as "a universal law or truth". This enables Boswell to argue that what is at stake in Romans 1:26-27 is that it is wrong for a heterosexual to violate his own sexual orientation by committing homosexual acts. But because homosexuals are by "nature" homosexual, homosexuality is perfectly normal for them. Therefore, homosexuality is not a sin for those born that way.

New Testament scholars like DeYoung, convincingly argue that the emphasis surrounding the term "nature" here refers to God's creative design for his image-bearing creatures from the beginning (Botha & van Rensburg, 2004:43; Burk, 2010:223; Caragounis, 2007:70; DeYoung, 2000:139-164; Loader, 2012:311; Malick, 1993a:331-332; Moo, 1996a:115). It is for this reason that "nature" has a moral sense and purpose which places Romans 1:26-27 well within the realm of ethical censure (Botha & van Rensburg, 2004:41). So to say that παρὰ φύσιν is "contrary to nature" infers "moral categories" denoting how men and women "ought to act" (Botha & van Rensburg, 2004:43). The use of the phrase here signifies one's constitution originally given by God at creation. The intention and design of the Creator are central here (Malick, 1993a:331). Even in the extra-biblical literature of Paul's era, παρὰ φύσιν was "standard terminology" that described homoerotic acts (Hays, 1994:17), as opposed to κατὰ φύσιν which was "according to nature", which is to say according to its creative design and intent.

So Paul's point in Romans 1:26-27 is that same-sex acts of any kind are abnormal when considered against the backdrop of creational design and intent.[27] The prominence and

[27] DeYoung (2000:139-164) spends the bulk of his chapter on Romans 1 dealing with the phrase παρὰ φύσιν, meticulously examining it in contrast to pro-gay interpreters. DeYoung (2000:151) goes into some detail with how

acceptance of homosexuality is further proof that humanity as a whole is suppressing the truth of God in unrighteousness.

When the lexical data is compared to the grammatical and syntactical considerations, Romans 1:24-27 should be seen to be making a strong statement regarding the results of revolting against God. The following four exegetical matters are only representative of the many syntagmatic issues that could be analysed:

1. The use of the inferential conjunction διό "Therefore" (Rm 1:24) serves to logically connect what follows to what precedes it, as it describes how God is dishonoured by truth suppressing humanity (Jewett, 2007:165; Morris, 1988:88). The conjunction sequentially records the chain of thought that results in God's intervening judgment. This could be described as a form of *lex talionis* wherein God essentially declares, "You've dishonoured me; so I've dishonoured you" (Loader, 2012:303). Stated another way, human rebellion has consequences, which Paul duly records.

2. Another key grammatical observation is Paul's use of θῆλυ for "women" (Rm 1:26)[28] and ἄρσην for "men" (Rm 1:27). This specific terminology is hard to ignore in that it more than likely reflects the language of the Septuagint in Genesis 1:27 (DeYoung, 2000:157; Jewett, 2007:173; Loader, 2012:301). Such an emphasis underscores Paul's creational presuppositions while contrasting the biological differences represented in this terminology over the sociological influences (Jewett, 2007:173). Simply said, Paul is accentuating the need for gender differentiation — biological distinction — in human coupling because it is directly tied to creational design and intent.

3. Romans 1:27 there is an important adverb that directly links verse 27 to verse 26: the Greek term ὁμοίως "likewise", or "in the same way" (Rm 1:27), supplies the necessary connection

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secular sources of the day defined the idea of "nature" in relation to homosexuality including discussions regarding Philo and Josephus. His interaction with both Philo and Josephus reveal they understood "nature" to refer to creation. Neither Philo nor Josephus understood "nature" as being independent of God or his law. Even philosophers like Plato used the term to describe the difference between normal and abnormal sexual relations (Malick, 1993a:339).

[28] Many scholars have puzzled over the mention of women (Rm 1:26) before the example of men (Rm 1:27). It is not known why women are mentioned first in this sequence. Hodge's (1882:63) believes that Paul mentions women first because "they are always the last to be affected in the decay of morals, and their corruption is, therefore, proof that all virtue is lost." Jewett (2007:174-176), based on his gender-egalitarian convictions, contends that women are discussed first because Paul is striking an egalitarian cord where female homoerotic acts are treated "in its own right and holding women to the same level of accountability as men". Gagnon (2001:299-303) explains that lesbianism, although present in antiquity, was not as prevalent although it was universally frowned upon. Although it is speculative, prevailing sentiment suggests that Hodge and Gagnon may be on the right track in their assessment that the presence and accepted practice of lesbianism indicates the extent of divine judgment.

which compares two parts of the same exegetical equation. Both verse 26 and 27 are juxtaposed as two related ways to “express misdirected and excessive passion” (Loader, 2012:311). Paul is equating the one with other (verse 26 with 27) and making a blanket assessment of homosexuality in general. When this is combined with the repetition of various pronouns used in Romans 1:27 “their” and “one another” it underscores their responsibility as adults while simultaneously referencing the mutuality and volitional consent of these acts (DeYoung, 2000:158; Jewett, 2007:180). There is terminological consistency between the two verses which is difficult to deny given the balance of the evidence.

4. In final analysis it must be mentioned that the severity of the language Paul chooses is significant: “degrading passions” (Rm 1:26), “burned in their desire” (Rm 1:27), and “committing indecent acts” all demarcate an excessive tone in Paul’s argument (Caragounis, 2007:72-73; Loader, 2012:305; Morris, 1988:92). What follows the suppression of truth and the revolt against God is severe in its results. It is a dramatic picture that Paul paints — a portrait meant to grab the attention of the reader.

5.3.1.3 Romans 1:24-27 concluding summary

When the contextual assumptions are taken together with the lexical and grammatical considerations, Paul’s thesis coalesces to provide a powerful argument detailing the tragic consequences of human rebellion against God. This is a rebellion that terminates in its own anti-reward of sexual distortion, among many other symptoms (Rm 1:28-32). Denying God’s true nature leads to a chain reaction (Rm 1:24, 26-28). Like a staircase where each successive step leads to the next, in like manner one distortion and deviation leads to another and so forth down the spiral staircase (Loader, 2012:298). The climax here is expressed in God’s actively handing over humanity to their fallen desires. It is here that homosexuality operates as a moniker by which the culture can be evaluated in accordance with divine standards established from creation (Malick, 1993a:336).

In Paul’s pursuit of highlighting human depravity and rebellion against God, he assumes the creation account to verify people were originally created by God as male and female with a heterosexual, complementarian orientation. This should be obvious to all on the basis of general revelation. Those who suppress this creation reality ultimately are given over to disqualified minds and distorted sexual acts (Loader, 2012:326). Given the contextual associations and allusions to creation and the Levitical law, Paul’s proof that same-sex relations are sinful is blanket disapproval for all same-sex activities. While pro-gay interpreters attempt to limit the focus to pederasty, prostitution, or exploitative acts (Loader, 2010:29), Paul has the entire complex of same-sex realities in mind here. If this were not so, Paul would have used more

precise terminology to express the narrower sense pro-gay advocates insist on (Jewett, 2007:179; Loader, 2010:32).

In conclusion, Loader (2010:27) concludes that "Paul's primary argument is that what led to wrong sex was wrong theology." When Romans 1:26-27 is viewed in this theological light, the text provides a theological approach that treats homoeroticism as unique from the rest of the ancient world in which it was framed.[29] This is an approach that reaches through time and resonates in the present.

5.3.2 Paul, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:10 and homosexuality

The epistle of Romans is not the only place where Paul addressed the topic of homosexuality. In the epistles of 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy, Paul makes explicitly negative statements regarding what is now considered homosexuality. The pro-gay response to this surrounds two specific Greek terms Paul uses to convey a negative assessment related to same-sex relations: in 1 Corinthians 6:9 the phrase μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται "effeminate, nor homosexuals" (Bible, 1995) — 1 Timothy 1:10 utilizes only the latter term. The meaning of the lemmas, μαλακός (effeminate) and ἀρσενοκοίτης (homosexual), is the primary object of debate: pro-gay interpreter Boswell insists that μαλακός has a meaning of "loose", "licentious", or "wanting in self-control" within a moral context (1981:106-107) which morphs into the understanding of masturbation. Therefore, the meaning cannot be restricted to homosexuals. Scanzoni and Mollenkott (1994:77-78) attribute a similar meaning of "self-indulgent". This also leads to a non-restrictive use of the word. In response to the second expression ἀρσενοκοίτης, Boswell (1981:107) claims the term meant "male prostitute". Scanzoni and Mollenkott (1994:76) agree. In both instances, pro-gay advocates seek to limit the meaning of the vocabulary to something other than homosexuality as it is now understood.

In response to this, this study will briefly examine the context, lexemes, grammar, and summary meaning of these two passages.[30]

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[29] As Mounce (1995:83) reminds his readers, it should be remembered that the "sexual drive itself is wholesome and good. It is God's way of providing both pleasure and progeny. When distorted and wrenched from its creative intent it becomes a degrading passion." In this way, sexual sin is like Newton's 3rd law of motion which "calls for an equal and opposite response".

[30] For more detailed treatment of these two passages and the related terms, this writer highly recommends two important works cited in the bibliography: D. F. Wright (1984) and the well-researched Th.M. thesis by Hammond (2001). Of the work by Wright (1984), Haas (1999), in his internet article, calls Wright's treatment of Boswell's contentions a "devastating critique" of the pro-gay assertions regarding Paul's use of ἀρσενοκοίτης. (Note: The Haas article is an internet article without page numbers.)

5.3.2.1 Contextual observations in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10

There are three contextual matters that when examined, helpfully determine the meaning of the terminology in both Pauline contexts. In the Corinthian context, Paul's reliance upon Leviticus 18-20 is hard to deny in 1 Corinthians 5-7 (DeYoung, 1992:212-213; Hammond, 2001:149-163; Rosner, 1999:49-58). There are strong textual indicators, as in Romans 1:18-32, that Paul adopted the sexual ethics of the Old Testament and his Jewish tradition, which would indicate that what he addressed, was unambiguously opposed to every kind of homosexuality (Burk, 2014:49, 51; Hammond, 2001:154; Thiselton, 2000:450-451).[31] This would explain why the early church consistently adopted the sexual ethic of the Old Testament on all matters sexual, including homosexuality (Hays, 1994:6). The near context (1 Cor 6:16) is also directly informed by the creation account (Gn 2:24) in what is a sexually related context regarding prostitution. This is a further example of Paul's significant reliance on Old Testament categories in the New Covenant setting.

The immediate setting of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 is succinctly summarized by Rosner (1999:118) as "Identity Informs Behavior". This simply means that Paul's point is that those who have been "washed", "sanctified", and "justified" have been transformed in Christ. This leads to a new identity that informs a behaviour that is in contradistinction to the vice list in 6:9-10. It is the future that should intrude upon the present reality of the believer, not the past. Because it is an internal disposition that gives rise to external acts, Paul contrasts what believers "were" versus what they now "are" in Christ, for it is this identity that influences practical outcomes (DeYoung, 1992:206). A life habitually characterized by the vices listed in 6:9-10 is an incongruous identity for one in Christ. A true believer will make a decisive break with the past identity with the imperative now conforming to the indicative reality in Christ (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010:244).[32]

In relationship to the vice list, Paul uses πόρνοι (fornicators) to head the list in 6:9-10. Gagnon (2012:88) believes this "highlights the incest" in 1 Corinthians 5, which utilizes πόρνος in 5:11 "immoral person" to describe the incestuous man. He further explains that Greek did not have a specific word for incest, so the other three sexually related terms that follow in 6:9-10[33] are all

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[31] Ciampa and Rosner (2010:242) declare, "Paul's opposition to all homosexual behavior (freely and willingly) seems to derive from Leviticus 18 & 20, which represent an absolute ban. Paul had thought about it and was not simply regurgitating a conventional list whether Jewish or secular."

[32] This would indicate that the idea of a "gay Christian" is as much of an oxymoron as a "homicidal Christian" or a "Christian adulterer". There is an incongruity attached to these labels.

[33] The question might be asked as to why sexual concerns head the vice list? It is not because of some morbid preoccupation Paul had with sexual sin. It is more than likely because the nature of the problem was so widespread that sexual violations were fronted to emphasize the most obvious problems first. In line with this thinking, Loader (2004:15-17) draws attention to the LXX's ordering of the Decalogue, with adultery listed before murder in both Exodus and Deuteronomy. Loader believes the changed order of the 6th and 7th commandments in the LXX "reflects

"more explicit terms for what else πόρνοι" means, which, according to Gagnon (2012:88), includes the other sexual offences listed in Leviticus 18 and 20. The considerable influence of Leviticus 18-20 on this corpus of 1 Corinthians supports such a conclusion. In expanded commentary on the vice list, he cites the deliberate structure of 6:9-10 with its themes and "phonic structures", which would have made memorization easier (Gagnon, 2012:84).

In the contextual instance of 1 Timothy 1:10, there is an explicit and direct link to the Mosaic law with the Levitical prohibitions presupposing the male-female requirement (Gagnon, 2012:87).[34] Given the representational nature of the Mosaic law, it is not surprising that Gagnon (2012:88-89) proposes that the Decalogue often served as "summary headings for the full range of laws in the Old Testament," with the 7th Commandment functioning as a summation for all sex laws.[35] This knowledge would sanction Paul to substitute "homosexuals" for "adulterers" in verse 10. At issue in 1 Timothy 1:10, according to Paul, is not with the use law, but with how false teachers (1 Tm 1:8) use the law (Caragounis, 2007:78-79; Hammond, 2001:159). After all, Paul taught that the law was beneficially sufficient for sound teaching (2 Tm 3:16-17). It is obvious that Paul's point of reference in this text is the Old Testament law and all of the vices listed in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 are, therefore, contrary to sound, healthy spiritual practices.

It is within this background, which has strong ties to Leviticus 18-20, that the two lexemes under consideration will now be examined for clues related to their respective meaning in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10.

5.3.2.2 Lexical and grammatical considerations for μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης

The first of the two terms to be investigated is μαλακός "effeminate". While Arndt *et al.,* (2000:613) render a definition of "soft" and "being passive in a same-sex relationship" in 1 Corinthians 6:9, they further qualify its use as "effeminate esp. of catamites, of men and boys who are sodomized by other males in such a relationship". This really doesn't resolve the issue, as both possibilities are still plausible. Arndt *et al.,* do helpfully comment that a definition of "male prostitutes" is "too narrow a rendering" while "sexual pervert" is "too broad" a meaning. Louw and Nida (1996:771-772) are more to the point regarding the meaning of μαλακός in the

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the concerns of this context [pronounced immorality]. The appellation, 'adulterous and sinful generation' (Mt 12:39; Mk 8:38; Mt 16:4) doubtless reflects the same emphasis" (Loader, 2004:19). The same idea would apply to the order of Jesus' vice list in Mark 7:21-22.

[34] See Josephus' *Against Apion* 2:199.

[35] Loader (2004:18) phrases the same idea differently, "The tendency to use the commandments as a framework of thought for consideration of other related laws was widespread."

Corinthian context by defining it as "the passive male partner in homosexual intercourse — 'homosexual'".[36]

Predicated upon the lexical data of the term, the commentators and theologians see μαλακός referring to "the passive partner (role) it was slang like 'sissy' or 'fairy' with feminine overtones" (Ukleja, 1983:351).[37] Taylor agrees with Ukleja, "The word μαλακός means literally 'soft' but is used here substantively in the sense of 'male performing the female role in homosexual relations'" (Taylor, 1995:6).[38] After spending twelve pages examining μαλακός in every conceivable context and usage, Hammond (2001:131-132) convincingly concludes, "when it is found in a context such as 1 Corinthians 6:9, in the middle of other moral vices, and standing juxtaposed to ἀρσενοκοίτης, it is more than likely referring to one who takes the passive role in a homosexual relationship. The term simply cannot be reduced to describing only 'male call-boys'".[39] Upon the balance of the lexical evidence, Thiselton (2000:449) agrees "there is broad (but not unanimous) agreement that μαλακοί in 1 Cor. 6:9-10 denotes 'the passive … partner … in male homosexual relations'".

It is when μαλακός is compared with ἀρσενοκοίτης in close proximity that the meaning becomes more conclusive (Thiselton, 2000:450). Many Greek scholars echo Conzelmann's (1975:106) assessment, "The sins of sexual immorality are made specific by the introduction of both passive … and active homosexuality" (cf. Baker, 2009:86; Burk, 2014:52; Ciampa & Rosner, 2010:241; Gagnon, 2012:90; Loader, 2010:31; Louw & Nida, 1996:771; Malick, 1993b:490-491).[40] So there is reasonable certainty that in the 1 Corinthians 6:9 milieu μαλακός is a reference to the passive partner in a same-sex relationship.

The second pivotal term, ἀρσενοκοίτης, found in both 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10, is what Rosner (1999:120), based on Wright (1984:125-153), call a "neologism", because there is no extant evidence the term was used prior to Paul's use of it. It is found first in only these two

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[36] Also see the NIDNTTE (2014) Vol. 3, page 217 for a similar understanding of the term. It is widely believed that when μαλακός is in juxtaposition with ἀρσενοκοίτης, as it is in 1 Corinthians 6:9 that it then takes the meaning of the passive partner in any kind of same-sex relationship.

[37] *Contra* Boswell (1981:353).

[38] See also Turner (1997:441) for the same definition with more explanation.

[39] Hammond (2001:119-132) marshals an impressive argument for a definition of μαλακός that means "passive partner" in a same-sex relationship.

[40] Additionally, when the two terms are located side-by-side it suggests that the prohibition is blanket disapproval of all homoerotic acts which in large measure related to the link with Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (Baker, 2009:86; Gagnon, 2012:90; Malick, 1993b:479).

texts in the Bible. Standard lexicons like Arndt *et al.,* define ἀρσενοκοίτης in the following way: "a male who engages in sexual activity with a person of his own sex, pederast", but Arndt *et al.,* (2000:135) qualify the term in a such way that it excludes limitation of the term to pederast in the Corinthian setting: "Paul's strictures against same-sex activity cannot be satisfactorily explained on the basis of alleged temple prostitution … or limited to contract with boys for homoerotic service." Swanson (1997:780) is more direct in his designation of the word, "one who takes the active role in homosexual intercourse". Similarly, Silva (2014:407-408) concurs with Arndt *et al.,* and Swanson, that "the reference is clearly to someone who practices homosexuality" although an allowance is made for a more restricted meaning.[41] Yet it is clear Silva favours a broad designation for the term in 1 Corinthians 6:9.

Because ἀρσενοκοίτης is a compound noun, the definition is really the sum of its parts. The construction is composed of two other nouns ἄρσην "male" and κοίτη "bed" with ἄρσην behaving in a trans-chronological way circumscribing the male species of all ages and categories.[42] Ukleja (1983:352) maintains ἄρσην places a strong emphasis on the sexual nature of the word. The second noun κοίτη "bed", is used as a euphemism was a crude term used to describe "sexual intercourse" and "licentious sexual activities (Rm 13:13)" (Ukleja, 1983:352).

The striking feature of the structure of ἀρσενοκοίτης is such that κοίτης actively delineates the object of the sleeping ἄρσην (Hammond, 2001:37-39; Wright, 1984:130). In this sense, the first half of the word is employed adverbially. This further strengthens the contention that the emphasis of the word is on the active same-sex partner.

The balance of the lexical and linguistic data, combined with the diachronic analysis of Hammond[43] (2001:132-149), Malick (1993b:482-487), and Wright (1984:125-153) designates that the lemma ἀρσενοκοίτης in both the 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy contexts, should be given a broad-based definition that encompasses all aspects of homosexuality to include both same-

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[41] Both Louw and Nida (1996:771) and Balz and Schneider (1987:396-398) favour the broader interpretation.

[42] It is worth noting that Paul used a term that was chronologically inclusive. Had Paul used the word ἀνδροκοιτης, the meaning would have been restricted to adult males excluding the possibility to designate pederastic forms of homosexuality, which were quite common in the Hellenized world (DeYoung, 1992:214)

[43] Earlier in his thesis, Hammond (2001:67-79) spends considerable time and space exploring the historical and literary implications of ἀρσενοκοίτης. First he traces the broader understanding of homosexuality — not limited to pederasty or male prostitution — in extra-biblical texts like Josephus and Plato. Then he investigates the use of ἀρσενοκοίτης in early patristic literature (Hammond, 2001:79-109) looking at how the church fathers understood ἀρσενοκοίτης. He examines the Sibylline Oracles, Aristides, Acts of John, Bardesanes, Hippolytus, Origin, Eusebius, John Chrysostom, Augustine and Marcus of Egypt. Hammond's (2001:108) conclusion is that the early church understood ἀρσενοκοίτης broadly as referring to all homosexual acts of the "worst sort".

sex orientation and homoerotic activities (DeYoung, 1992:196, 202-207; Thiselton, 2000:452). In support of this, early translations of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 in the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic all provide a meaning equivalent to the English "homosexual", with the first part of the compound serving as the object of the second half (DeYoung, 1992:200; Wright, 1984:144-145). Consequently, it can be said that the *usus loquendi* (normal use) of ἀρσενοκοίτης broadly designated all same-sex acts.

So general is the use of ἀρσενοκοίτης, that many scholars contend that Paul's reliance on Levitical influence was pronounced enough that he coined (neologism) a new term based on the Septuagint's reading of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (Baker, 2009:86; Ciampa and Rosner, 1994:120; DeYoung, 1992:207-211; Gagnon, 2012:87; Hammond, 2001:149-163; Hays, 1994:7; Wright, 1989:298):[44]

Leviticus 18:22: Καὶ μετὰ <u>ἄρσενος</u> οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ <u>κοίτην</u> γυναικείαν …
(And you shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female …)

Leviticus 20:13: Καὶ ὃς ἂν κοιμηθῇ μετὰ <u>ἄρσενος κοίτην</u> γυναικὸς …
(And a man who lies with a male as one lies with a woman …)

These scholars are all persuaded of the link between the Septuagint and Paul's use of ἀρσενοκοίτης. Wright represents the widely held sentiment affirming, "It is surely a safe presumption here that ἀρσενοκοιτεῖν refers to the Levitical proscription of male homosexual activity … the Mosaic corpus, Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 provided all the authority that was needed to justify the ban on pederasty. What seems clear is that Christian writers associated this prohibition which they took over as part of the ethical legacy of Hellenistic Judaism with the ἀρσενοκοιτία forbidden in 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10" (1984:127, 136). So based on his intimate familiarity with the Septuagint, Paul combined the two nouns ἄρσην and κοίτη to create a new term that described an all-encompassing ban on all same-sex activity (DeYoung, 1992:211).[45] One should not think it unusual for Paul to coin a new term or phrase, for DeYoung states that because of his significant reliance on the Septuagint, Paul coined 179 different terms (1992:212).[46] Had Paul wanted to stress pederasty or male prostitution he could have easily

[44] Underlined emphasis added.

[45] Loader (2010:31) disagrees that Paul invented the term ἀρσενοκοίτης, but nevertheless believes it was an invention of that era. It is difficult to prove either way, so one should avoid dogmatism on the matter. What is sure is that in light of Paul's heavy reliance on both the creation account and Mosaic law, it is quite plausible that Paul coined the term.

[46] Hammond (2001:149-163) does a very thorough job detailing Paul's reliance on the LXX. He strengthens the link between Paul and his usage of the Levitical categories for homosexuality from 18:22 and 20:13.

used a more particular term like παιδοφθορία “male homosexuality with teenagers” (DeYoung, 1992:199), or the more common παιδεραστής “lover of boys”, from which “pederasty” is derived (Gagnon, 2012:87; Schreiner, 2006:71). Based on the balance of the evidence, it is likely Paul’s reliance on Mosaic law and Jewish tradition influenced his choice of the more comprehensively nuanced neologism ἀρσενοκοίτης.

5.3.2.3 Concluding summary of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10

In summary of Paul’s usage of this watershed term, Hammond, after a lengthy discussion on Paul’s reliance on the Septuagint, concludes: “Although bold attempts have been made to redefine ἀρσενοκοίτης, or claim that it is ambiguous, the contrary can be demonstrated. The argument for the traditional view is strengthened even more when an examination of Moses’ prohibition in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 shows that this is where Pail found inspiration for condemning homosexuality, and not any specific type of it, but homosexuality in general” (Hammond, 2001:163).

Consequently, when the weight of the context is combined with the cumulative lexical data, one can be fairly confident when μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης are taken together, in light of their respective historical and literary backgrounds, that Paul’s condemnation of homosexuality is comprehensive. Paul’s negative assessment of homosexuality includes all same-sex bonds: loving and committed relationships, pederasty, male prostitution, exploitative varieties, consensual and pleasurable liaisons, and otherwise. The attempt to restrict the use of μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης to any one of these variations in either of the two contexts is unconvincing. On this basis, Thiselton (2000:452) believes that the pluralistic sexual ethic of the Graeco-Roman era is not unlike that of the present day. This is all in stark contrast to pro-gay interpreters like Boswell, who insist otherwise.

5.4 Jude: apostasy, false teachers, and homosexuality

While non-Pauline epistles maintain the censure of both Jesus and Paul on any sexual distortion beyond the creation ordinance, the general epistles do not offer any explicit denunciations of homosexuality. But the book of Jude (v.7) contains what appears to be a direct allusion condemning homoerotic relations by way of *analogia fidei* (analogy of the faith). This parallels Peter’s account in 2 Peter 2:4-10. But it is the unique phraseology of Jude that invites the connection to homosexuality.

5.4.1 The context of Jude 7

The overarching theme of this short epistle is that of apostasy, or departing from the faith. Jude outlines the reason for his epistle in verses 3 and 4. Due to the proliferation of false teachers and their theological deviations from "the faith", Jude is compelled to "earnestly contend" for theological orthodoxy, which included an orthodox Christology (v.4).

The structure of verses 5 through 7 conveys the thrust of Jude's thesis. In a series of three rapid-fire Old Testament illustrations, Jude invokes the past to confront his present crisis (Hiebert, 1989:237): (1) Jude 5 recounts the unbelief of those Hebrews who died in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt, which is likened to unbelief; (2) verse 6 remembers the rebellion of the angels who left their first estate and presumably involved themselves in the affairs of humanity in Genesis 6:1-4.[47] This accounts for part of the "strange flesh" of verse 7. It is commonly thought these angels "sons of God" cohabitated with the women of Adam's race (Coder, 1958:34-43; Hiebert, 1989:237-238; MacArthur, 1984:42-49; Wenham, 1987:140-141)[48]; (3) then Jude invokes the Genesis 19:1-11 account of Sodom and Gomorrah. This knowledge of Sodom was infamously known in antiquity as the epitome of extreme immorality, which included homosexuality. [49] This threefold progression is somewhat reminiscent of the progression discussed in Romans 1:18-32 (4.2.1).

In the context of the link to Sodom and Gomorrah, both Davids (2006:53-54) and Schreiner (2003:452-453) explore the extra-biblical literature surrounding the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.[50] In their estimation, the ancients of that era made a direct parallel between Sodom and homosexuality. They both contend that Jude, by use of the Sodom and Gomorrah analogy, is referencing homosexuality among other sins.

5.4.2 The lexical and grammatical considerations of Jude 7

The first key term of note found in verse 7 is the aorist active participle from ἐκπορνεύω "indulged in gross immorality". This verbal idea is *hapax legomena* (i.e., once spoken) and is

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[47] Cf. 2 Peter 2:4-5

[48] It is not the purpose of this study to determine who the "sons of God" were in Genesis 6:1-4, but just to note that whatever is being referenced is a gross violation of God's sexual norms as established in creation. The best treatment of this issue encountered by this writer is by Ross (1988:181-183) who combines the idea of humans and demonic activity to promote a hybrid view that sees the "sons of God" as demonically inspired humans who distort sexuality and pervert marriage.

[49] Hiebert (1989:236) notes that Sodom and Gomorrah was so synonymously identified with sexual vice that an inscription was found scribbled on a wall in Pompeii which read "Sodoma Gomorra".

[50] According to Schreiner (2003:452), Philo specifically identified Sodom and Gomorrah with the sin of homosexuality, although he did recognize the other many other sins and moral debauchery prevalent there.

uniquely used only here in the New Testament to denote something of a very heinous nature. This is a compound term comprised of the prefix ἐκ "out" and the familiar term πόρνος / πορνεία, which has the meaning of "of various kinds of 'unsanctioned sexual intercourse'" (Arndt *et al.,* 2000:854). Given the compound nature of the word, Hiebert (1989:238) suggests that it is an "expressive term" that is assigned an "intense force indicating an 'out and out surrender to extravagant sexual lust". The vast numbers of commentators connect ἐκπορνεύω with Genesis 19:4-11 and the attempted homosexual rape associated with those two cities (Davids, 2006:52). This is consistent with the conclusion of the extra-biblical literature of Jude's day. It is very possible that Jude was making that direct correlation between Sodom and Gomorrah and the apostate situation he identifies in his day (Jude 8).

The other lexical key in Jude 7 is σαρκὸς ἑτέρας "strange flesh" or "other flesh". There are some 100 New Testament occurrences of the adjective ἑτέρας (*heteras*), but Jude's use of the word is distinct being translated "strange". In this context, it uniquely connotes "that which is different from the established order" (Hiebert, 1989:238).[51] The cue for this inference is communicated by the prior participial phrase ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω "went after", conveying a "departure from the established order in nature to follow a practice contrary to nature" (Hiebert, 1989:238).[52] It is notable that the action expressed here is deliberate, with those guilty of apostasy abandoning the established norms of the male-female relationship to pursue "strange flesh" (Hiebert, 1989:238). Schreiner (2003:453) concurs, saying that σαρκὸς ἑτέρας "naturally refers to a desire for those of the same-sex".

It is on this basis, that Jude graphically details the striking description the violator's divine judgement in vivid detail of the present. Henceforth, past apostates serve a stern word of caution for those who, in like manner, would follow them to their ruin.

5.4.3 Concluding summary on Jude 7

Both Peter and Jude consider the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as an apt climax upon which to key their respective warnings against the licentious characteristics of the apostates they target. Their warning is to those who were at that time traveling down the road of apostasy and needed to be warned of their eternal peril for pursuing this path.

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[51] The NIV's rendering "perversion" appears weak in contrast to the meaning above.

[52] Again, this is reminiscent of the prior examination of Romans 1:18-32. A similar pattern is observed: unbelief, rebellion, and sexual immorality that undoubtedly include homosexuality in many instances.

Those who depart from sound doctrine (Jude 3-4) find themselves corrupting cardinal doctrines like Christology (Jude 4). As the distance of their departure from the revealed truth from God increases, so does unbelief in the God they say they serve. Once this sequence of unbelief, rebellion, and immorality is set in motion, it ultimately eventuates in “gross immorality” and the pursuance of “strange flesh”, which often includes homosexuality, along with other sexual departures.

5.5 Summary of New Testament texts on homosexuality

In surveying the preceding New Testament passages, there are some common threads that bind all the passages together. In one way or another each of these passages demonstrates a relationship with the Old Testament on matters related to sexuality and or marriage. Jesus reaches (Mt 19:4-6) all the way back to a pre-fall world at creation to establish the necessary prerequisites for marriage. This includes gender distinction, the numerical requirement of only two persons, and the covenantal permanence of a monogamous relationship. In Mark 7:19-23 Jesus references the hamartiological component of the inner man which predisposes one to the sinful manifestations he there lists. His list includes the derogation of all sexual distortion that transgresses the creation ordinance. While Jesus never specifically mentioned homosexuality by name, it is patently clear that he would denounce all sexual infractions beyond that which is outlined in the creation account of Genesis 1-2.

The Apostle Paul issued the most direct denunciations of homosexuality in the New Testament. Taking into consideration his unique training and back ground in the Old Testament and Jewish tradition, he displays knowledge of creation, Levitical law, and the Decalogue in his deliberations on the topic of homosexuality. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul’s thesis is the universal rebellion of humanity towards God. Paul reveals how the wrath of God is disclosed against those who suppress the generally-revealed truth of God in unrighteousness. The leading indicator of God’s settled wrath against rebellious humanity is graphically depicted by the disordered sameness of lesbianism and male homosexuality. All of which violates God’s creational intent and design from the beginning. Paul’s indictment of same-sex acts is comprehensive in its scope, with all same-sex variations at odds with God’s created order — a creation he pronounced “very good” (Gn 1:31). Yet the redeeming grace of God occupies the near horizon as a beacon of hope for those who repent and seek forgiveness for their sexual brokenness.

Paul's approach to homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 finds an anchor in the Mosaic law of Leviticus 18-20 in 1 Corinthians 6:9; and with the Ten Commandments in 1 Timothy 1:10 framing the discussion. Paul's choice of vocabulary in 1 Corinthians 6:9, μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης, functions as a blanket prohibition against all modes of same-sex activity in both its passive and active expressions. The appeal to the special term ἀρσενοκοίτης in both 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 may well have been devised by Paul based on the influence of the Septuagint from Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Paul's placement of homosexuality in these two vice lists is meant to stress the importance of identity, as identity influences behaviour. An identity circumscribed by Christ should not be characterized by the habitual sins in Paul's vice list.

Like the previous passages, Jude 7 finds direct influence from the Old Testament and the Sodom and Gomorrah incident from Genesis 19:1-11. Those who depart from the faith, and deviate from biblical orthodoxy, while following their own cleverly devised fables, are warned that their unbelief will lead to rebellion, with the rebellion effecting "gross immorality" and "strange flesh" of the baser sort. While circumscribing a host of sexual distortions, there is an accent here on homoerotic behaviour.

The citations, allusions, and inferences from creation, the Levitical law, and the Ten Commandments draw clear lines between the two testaments and sexual ethics. Even though homosexuality is not often addressed in the New Testament, what is addressed is univocally and unequivocally condemned in all its forms — actions and attitudes. The Bible is entirely consistent and unrelenting in its negative portrayal of any sexual expression that exceeds the divinely established boundaries found in the pre-fall world of paradise. It is against this background that the same-sex prohibitions should be read.

In the final estimation, the New Testament positively supports and promotes God's creation ordinance for marriage and sexuality. It is from this pre-fall paradigm that the New Testament establishes and stresses the New Covenant norms for gender, marriage, and sexuality. The reason for this is clarified by Burk (2010:224), who concludes: "From the Garden of Eden forward, God intended marriage and the marriage act to enact a parable of another marriage: Christ's marriage to his church (Eph. 5:31-32). Thus, marriage and sex are not defined by the culture, but by the gospel itself. Jesus loves the bride exclusively and self-sacrificially; and Jesus' bride must respect and submit to her husband. In this way, God designed marriage to portray a gospel-archetype rooted in his eternal purposes." This gospel-archetype is something homosexuality will never be able to adequately reflect or approximate even in a loving,

consensual, and committed arrangement. In this, the New Testament is as unambiguous as it is unapologetic.

6 APPLYING LEVITICUS 18:22 AND 20:13 IN A 21ST-CENTURY SETTING

Up to this point the passages in question (Lev. 18:22; 20:13) have been discussed from both the pro-gay and the grammatical-historical perspectives. Additionally, Chapter 4 considered the relationship between Mosaic law and the New Testament with an emphasis on the Levitical proscription of homosexuality and its place in a New Covenant setting. Then the New Testament's view of homosexuality was examined with the conclusion that both testaments unequivocally and inclusively condemn all manner of homosexuality. Now it is time to discuss the biblical application of this stated prohibition for the current 21st-century culture. This entails defining the term application, stating some the key presuppositions that undergird application, affirming some of the cautions and complications of applying the text, and then delineating the primary hermeneutical controls for guiding the application process. Last, but not least, some specific applications will be offered to illustrate the imminent practicality of these two ancient texts (Lv 18:22; 20:13).

6.1 Defining application

It is vital to accurately define just what application is so that the right trajectory is established. This writer was recently handed a new hermeneutics textbook to evaluate for a friend. By simply turning to the book's definition of hermeneutics it was a fairly simple matter to judge the content and methodology of the book. The definition given by the compliers of this particular hermeneutics textbook, defined hermeneutics as "application". In this definition hermeneutics and application are somehow synonymous. But is that really the case? What is application? A very concise and simple definition is offered by Shealy (2002:187), who says that "application is the use or practice of God's message in personal life". In a more detailed definition, Zuck (1996:281) concludes that application is "the process of communicating the present day relevance of the biblical text specifying how that relevance may be translated into action, and inviting and urging the hearers to make that transference".[1] In close connection with these two definitions, Kostenberger and Patterson (2011:785) say that application "is the believer's obedience to the correct interpretation of God's word". All three definitions overlap and have much to commend them.

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[1] In further explanation, Zuck (1996:282-286) outlines why what he calls "relevance-and-response" application is necessary: (1) the nature of spiritual life (Js 1:22-25); (2) the purpose of the Bible to effect needed change in humanity through salvation and sanctification (2 Tm 3:14-17); (3) the efficacy of Scripture in prescribing the remedy for humanity's sinful condition; (4) the nature of learning by applying the meaning of the text; and (5) the objective of preaching and teaching the Bible's message to promote internal and external change in believer's lives. The crux of Zuck's contention is that the singular-sense meaning of the text ultimately is meant to be applied, but interpretation is a necessary precursor to application. For one cannot adequately apply what one does not know. If the interpretation is wrong then so will be the application.

What these definitions all have in common is that these scholars assume that hermeneutics and exegesis precede the process of application. They also imply that the interpreter stops short if he or she discovers the meaning of the text but then fails to practically apply it. So in essence, the interpreter is answering basic questions when the meaning of any text is applied: "How does this relate to me?", "How does this relate to others?", "How does this relate to God — i.e., what do I learn about God?" (Rosscup, 1988:13).

There are three qualifiers that help keep one's definition of application on course:

1. Although the meaning of any given text has a singular sense, the application(s) of that text may be many and varied. This is because application is a distinct process from hermeneutics (Shealy, 2002:187).

2. McQuilkin (1992:297-315) helpfully distinguishes between what he calls explicit and generic principles of application, or what Zuck (1995:283) calls explicit and implicit. Explicit principles that guide application are those principles that are specific declarations and directives openly declaring the only acceptable response to God is obedience in faith (McQuilkin, 1992:298-300), whereas, generic, i.e., implicit, principles can be more broadly applied to more than one situation (McQuilkin, 1992:300-303).[2]

3. A third qualifier of application is that the interpreter needs to distinguish between the principle and the application which is derived from the principle (Kuske, 1994:98). The application is more than the principle that drives it. Application is the specific situation to which the principle is applied (Rosscup, 1988:14). This could be illustrated by the general principle "Do not steal", which, when applied to a specific situation related to paying income tax it would be applied by saying, "It is always wrong to steal from the government by cheating on your income tax." Here, Kuske (1994:98) concurs, "A principle and its application need to be clearly distinguished from one another, lest the application be turned into a principle".

By keeping these three qualifiers in mind, it helps the interpreter to maintain a proper tension for the stated definition of biblical application. Biblical application is distinct from the hermeneutical rules that precede it. It is also important to discern direct (explicit) and indirect (implicit)

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[2] In distinguishing the difference between explicit and generic principles for application, McQuilkin (1992:300) notes that a general principle like love cannot be used to set aside a situation that is prescribed by an explicit injunction from Scripture. This is something that is quite common in today's relativistic, feeling oriented culture. This is well illustrated by those who rationalize and justify homosexuality on the basis of "love". This amounts to a situational ethic. Stealing and lying are wrong even if done in the name of love.

principles which are derived from the meaning of the text exegeted, for this will drive the specific application to life and living. In turn, these principles should not be confused with the particular application to which they are applied.

6.2 Applicational presuppositions

As stated earlier in Chapter 2, assumptions are important drivers of the hermeneutical process from which the enterprise of application is not exempt. To keep the procedure of application balanced it is important to mention some of the primary presuppositions that inform the application methodology. These 7 presuppositions form the basis for accurately applying the rightly divided word of God:

1. Application[3] is a distinct and separate process from the actual interpretation itself: This is crucial because of the confusion caused when application is included in the hermeneutical and exegetical process. With this in view, Shealy (2002:166) warns that homogenizing application with hermeneutics and exegesis leads to a reader-response type of hermeneutic that is anthropocentric rather than Christocentric. Such an approach invites eisegetical interpretations rooted in the subjective. It is important to keep the proper sequence in order here: hermeneutics is the set of interpretive rules that lead to exegesis, which is the application of those hermeneutical rules. Then, once the meaning of the text is exhumed by exegesis, this meaning is then applied and practically implemented. Larkin (1988:313) agrees, "…Interpretation and application should not be so linked that they become identical." Why? Because the dependence on the interpreter's context and horizon ultimately determines what the Bible means (Larkin, 1988:313). This amounts to a what-it-means-to-me approach to hermeneutics. For a proper application to be made it must stand on the shoulders of accurate textual meaning (Rosscup, 1988:16, 18). This is not possible when the two processes are confused.[4]

2. Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture: It is Kuske (1994:84-87) who restates this principle several times stressing its import for the interpreters understanding. He claims by allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture the clarity and authority of the Bible are maintained

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[3] Larkin prefers to use the designation "significance" rather than "application", which he bases on the work of E.D. Hirsch *Validity in Interpretation* (1967). He goes on to state that, "when meaning and significance retain their distinction, the Bible's authority as a referential standard is maintained; this is essential if Scripture is to fulfil its declared intention to teach, reprove, correct, and instruct in righteousness" (Larkin, 1988:313).

[4] Both Ramm (1993:185-190) and Terry (1999:18-22) make a distinction between interpretation and application, with Terry clearly stating that the biblical hermeneutics is distinct from all other related disciplines. For his part, Ramm (1993:185) asserts: "All practical lessons, all applications of Scripture, all devotional material, must be governed by general Protestant hermeneutics". So, based on Ramm's evaluation, there is a distinction between hermeneutics and application.

and underscored (Kuske, 1994:86-87).[5] This is well summarized by Larkin (1988:302), who states that "a text best communicates its intended message when it can do so on its own terms". This is a tried and true principle stemming from the Reformation and is closely linked to *sola Scriptura* and the perspicuity (clarity) of Scripture.

3. The spiritual preparation of the interpreter is another critical presuppositional component in both the hermeneutical process, and the subsequent application of the text. The Bible is after all a spiritual book and it requires more than an academic mind-set to interpret it and subsequently apply it to specific situations (1 Cor 2:13-14). For this reason, Larkin (1988:302) addresses the whole issue of mind renewal and the need for the interpreter to have a transformed mind because of the noetic effects of sin (Rm 12:1-2; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:8-10). A spiritually renewed mind is required for an adequate understanding of the text, and the ensuing application of the meaning derived. One could say that this is the progressive sanctification of the believer applied in the realm of biblical interpretation and application. The believer here submits to the word of God, seeking to humbly exegete rather than eisegete the meaning of the text. This requires some critical self-examination on the part of the interpreter so that the interpreter does not promiscuously handle the word of truth (Rosscup, 1988:17). This serves as motivation for the interpreter to rely on the person and work of the Holy Spirit seeking direction from him (Rm 8:14; Gl 5:18; Eph 5:18) (Rosscup, 1988:19).[6]

4. The primary message of the Bible is central to the application process. The overall message of the Bible establishes parameters that control the whole application procedure. There is an overall soteric and Christocentric focus throughout the Bible (Larkin, 1988:302, 308). This soteriological and Christological emphasis is viewed against the backdrop of human depravity, the human need for redemption, and the ongoing necessity to apply this message to one's life while proclaiming it to others (Kuske, 1994:93). The aggregate of this is seen in Paul's words to Timothy that the Bible makes one wise not only unto salvation, but also in the daily demonstration of that salvation in all of life (2 Tm 3:14-17). Thus, as a control to

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[5] McQuilkin echoes the same sentiment: "… any approach to the Scripture must be the approach that Scripture takes to itself; otherwise, Scripture is no longer the ultimate authority. The apostles treated the teaching of Christ as the ultimate authority" (1992:282).

[6] Related to proper spiritual preparation see, Kloster (1984:449-472); Kostenberger and Patterson (2011:798-800); Marshall (1996:66-74); McQuilkin (1992:19-25); and Terry (1999:28-30). It is worth noting that the pro-gay interpreters surveyed for this dissertation never mentioned this principle. The implication is that they see the interpretive process as merely academic and intellectual. Perhaps this is why they end up where they do in their conclusions.

keep from going too far off course, it is critical to be reminded what the overall thrust of Scripture is as this provides equilibrium to the realm of the practical.

5. There must be a settled conviction that the Bible is what it claims to be — the inspired and inerrant word of God. As the word of God, the Scriptures exude authority as God's divine discloser to humanity. Predicated on this authority, the Bible presents timeless propositional truths that are applicable to any people in any age. So it can be said the Bible is as relevant today as it was to its original audience (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:785).

6. Avoid the two applicational extremes that abound. At one end of the spectrum is the extreme that eschews application altogether contented in the meaning alone. The other extreme is that which applies too much, or places too great an weight on application to the point that application becomes part of the hermeneutical process becoming entangled with exegesis (Zuck, 1995:279). A balance must be achieved here — a balance that acknowledges the priority of first uncovering the authorial intentioned meaning, and then parlaying that textual meaning into practical application. Second Timothy 3:16-17 makes it clear that the Bible is relevant for today when properly understood.[7]

7. Strive for objectivity when interpreting and applying the text (Shealy, 2002:187). The assumption of spiritual preparation (see number 3 above) comes to bear on this presupposition as the interpreter consciously and humbly seeks the meaning of the text. This is achieved by setting aside one's own ambitions and preconceived notions while earnestly seeking the message that God intended through the human author. There is a real danger that the interpreter's cultural pre-understanding can easily intrude into the exegetical process. Therefore, the interpreter must consciously set aside personal cultural preconditioning, content with the message God intended from the beginning (Larkin, 1988:301).[8]

Armed with these foundational presuppositions, the interpreter has a good grounding as the applicational process begins. These seven suppositions serve as a basis to guide in the

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[7] The primary caution when clearly distinguishing between hermeneutics and application and making them separate processes is that if pushed to an extreme it could contribute to not applying the text at all. This writer has heard a few scholars say that the preachers' task is simply to uncover the meaning of the Bible. Then to let the hearer of the proclaimed word apply it for themselves.

[8] It is commonly believed that hermeneutical objectivity is a myth. But when the proper controls are in place and personally implemented, objectivity is possible. Thomas Howe's (2004:1-549) book *Objectivity in Biblical Interpretation* explores the thesis of hermeneutical objectivity, concluding that hermeneutical objectivity is possible under the right controls and conditions. From a more secular standpoint, Hirsch (1967:209-244) investigates the issue of hermeneutical objectivity. Hirsch's evaluation is quite philosophical at points, but nevertheless helpful in thinking through the issue.

judicious application of textual meaning. But in conjunction with these principles, the interpreter needs to consider some basic cautions related to application.

6.3 Applicational cautions considered

In addition to the essential presuppositions above, the interpreter should intuitively think through some general cautions related to faithfully applying the meaning of the text. These cautions are in brief as follows:

1. It should be remembered that the Bible is not a compendium of easily referenced principles that can randomly be applied to life and living (Ramm, 1993:186-187). As the supreme rule for faith and practice, the Bible's principles should not just be abstracted from their context for quick and ready use. Rather, biblical truths are "concrete universal principles that are expressed in the text in such a way that they are valid for all people of God in all cultures" (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:789).[9]

2. The interpreter must guard against historical relativism (Kuske, 1994:88-91). Kuske cites three common examples of historical relativism: (1) Liberation Theology with its hermeneutical circle; (2) Dynamic equivalence, which places too high a premium on present-day culture in the interpretative process; (3) and the view which states: only explicit commands are universal and applicable today, with all others being culture bound with no viable application for today.

3. The interpreter needs to guard against fragmentation of the text (Larkin, 1988:298). Fragmentation places present-day concerns over Scripture during the hermeneutical process. A good example of this is seen via the philosophical-egalitarian feminists who read feminist concerns into the exegetical process. Given the similarities between the feminist hermeneutic and the pro-gay interpretation, the concern is well founded.

4. There is a caution to avoid syncretism (Larkin, 1988:319-321) by confusing current context with the biblical context. Larkin's example of Paul on Mars Hill in Acts 17 helpfully illustrates this caution. Although Paul was well aware of the Athenian worldview, he did not concede to their worldview. Instead, Paul skilfully addressed their worldview with the fundamental truths of the gospel couched in terms and a framework they understood. When the interpreter accepts the modern-day premise and nomenclature of homosexuality, and then seeks to

[9] Rosscup (1988:17) warns would-be interpreters to abstain from "little games of magic" and the "Ouija board" approach to interpretation and application. The word of God should be soberly handled to avoid hermeneutical and applicational hepatomancy.

interpret Scripture on that basis, it is both anachronistic and a miscarriage of the hermeneutical process. This results in syncretism.

5. Following closely with the previous point, the interpreter should avoid prioritizing human words and experiences over the word of God (Larkin, 1988:298). This subverts the authority of the Bible and replaces it with human autonomy as the canon of authority. All of this is presently exemplified in current homosexual nomenclature related to the phrase "sexual orientation". Although the term is often invoked in discussion, it is rarely defined. Rather it is assumed that "sexual orientation" automatically supersedes anything the Bible might say to the contrary of pro-gay advocates.

6. The interpreter needs to bear in mind that not every direct command found in Scripture directly applies to the modern exegete (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:786). The dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are not binding for the New Covenant believer today according to Jesus' explicit negation of such in Mark 7:19. Yet there is an indirect principle that can be applied. The purpose of these dietary laws primarily related to ancient Israel's separation from the pagan nations around (Lv 11:44-45; Dt 14:2, 21). In like manner, the 21st-century Christian is called to be unique and distinct from the world (2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 Jn 2:15-17) — to be in the world, but not of the world.

7. In relation to the first caution above, the interpreter should recognize that the Bible does not exhaustively and directly address the many present-day ethical concerns that are faced today (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:786). Yet, like the Old Testament law, the New Testament establishes and advances a wide range of commands and imperatives that serve as foundational precedents that inform ethical responses to modern-day concerns.[10]

8. It is also important for the interpreter to always remember that the Bible is comprised of many varieties of literary genres that encompass creation, fall, redemption, and the consummation to come. There are many situations, commands, aphorisms, and stories embedded in the Bible. Yet these are all germane to all people by virtue of a shared

[10] See 4.2.4 of this dissertation for further explanation of the Mosaic law as a foundational precedent for making ethical and moral choices. An example from Leviticus 19:18 is the famous dictum to "love your neighbour as yourself". But this is not always in the positive, as many might think. Leviticus 19:17 clarifies that love includes reproving a neighbour who lives in sin. Hence, it is never truly loving to affirm one's neighbour in their sin. Furthermore, the New Testament never repeats the proscription against bestiality found in passages like Leviticus 18:23. Can an argument from silence be made in the promotion of bestiality in the modern era? Hardly, for the general commands given by both Christ and Paul militate against this blanket approval (Mk 7:21-22; 1 Th 4:3-7). Pornography is never mentioned in Scripture, but the indictment of Christ (Mt 5:27-28), combined with Paul's assessment of fornication (1 Th 4:3-7), is clear that one should guard their thoughts as well as their actions to keep from distorting the sexual boundaries God has established from the beginning.

> humanity and sin that is common to the entire human race (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:787). Some principles can be directly applied while others have indirect import by virtue of illustration or analogy. For this reason, it is recommended that each passage from each genre needs to be investigated on its individual merits to ascertain whether it is universally applicable or not (Kuske, 1994:96).[11]

At this juncture, the interpreter could be forgiven for being overwhelmed with the sheer number of presuppositions and cautions that one has to think about before applying the textual meaning. But to the seasoned interpreter, these crucial considerations become second nature over time. Yet, a good reminder from time to time is valuable so that poor hermeneutical practices do not develop and become entrenched. All of this is preparatory for the hermeneutical controls which actually help guide the process to a particular application of the text to specific persons or situations.

6.4 Hermeneutical controls: steps that lead to application

After examining the preliminary matters related to the application of the text, it is now time to outline the hermeneutical controls that will serve to guide meaning onto the onramp of application. These controls are meant to restrict and curb abuses of this process to ensure that the application is in keeping with textual meaning. In accordance with this, these controls will be phrased in the form of interpretational questions the interpreter should ask throughout the procedure:

6.4.1 Were the hermeneutical rules properly followed during the exegetical process?

In order to arrive at a correct application, the practical outcome needs to be predicated on sound interpretation of the text (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:790; Rosscup, 1988:18; Shealy, 2002:186). Application should always build on the accurate singular-sense meaning that originates out of correctly applied hermeneutical rules of the grammatical-historical tradition. Otherwise, the interpreter will misapply the application. Therefore, exegesis should control application. Apart from this the interpreter will be like the pilot who arrived at the wrong airport because he failed to calibrate his navigational equipment before take-off.[12]

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[11] Kuske (1994:96) analyses the two common approaches used by evangelicals to determine whether a passage is historically conditioned or not: (1) everything is universally applicable unless limited by Scripture; (2) everything is historically conditioned unless explicitly indicated otherwise. Kuske concludes that it is preferable to examine each passage on its own merits. *Contra* McQuilkin (1992:279), who opts for the universally-applicable-unless-limited-by-Scripture option. Kuske discusses the pros and cons of these approaches (96-98). While all three approaches seek to preserve the authority of God's word, Kuske's proposal is the most consistent in light of the progressive nature of God's word.

[12] McQuilkin (1984:230-240) famously asked 7 key questions to determine the normativity of text in his essay for *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, which was part of the ongoing study and research for the *Chicago statement on biblical inerrancy*. It is upon these often used questions, that the following hermeneutical controls are based.

It is this writer's contention, based on the research presented so far, that pro-gay interpreters begin with culture and, therefore, amalgamate interpretation with application. This confuses the entire process producing the contrary conclusions witnessed in Chapter 2.

6.4.2 Does the biblical context limit the original recipient or application?

Another way of asking this question is to ask "Is the text conditioned in any way by cultural or covenantal issues that make it impossible to apply the text in anyway?" (Felix, 2002:390; Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:790; Kuske, 1994:99-100; Larkin, 1988:355; Shealy, 2002:185; Zuck, 1995:283). There are numerous examples that could be offered here: In Exodus 3:5 God tells Moses to remove his sandals because the ground upon which he treads is holy. The immediate context based on the narrative genre makes it clear that this applied to Moses at that time and place. In this context there is no enduring directive for the modern interpreter to take their sandals off while reading that text. What should be observed there is the character of God and the obedience of Moses. In similar fashion, when God commands Jacob to get out of the land, in Genesis 31:13, this is not an imperative for the present-day reader to sell their home and move. This is a very limited command to a specific person and specific place and time. From a New Testament perspective 1 Timothy 5:17 uses the generic term "elders" which would imply a universal application for the church at large from there on out. In contrast, 1 Timothy 1:2-3 finds Paul specifically addressing Timothy, telling Timothy to remain on at Ephesus. Unless the current-day reader is planning a trip to Ephesus in the near future, this might be a bit difficult for the reader to obey. The point is that in each instance cited, the immediate context dictates the parameters of application with the instruction specified.

The immediate context of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 includes all of ancient Israel. The context in Leviticus 18 also mentions Egypt and Canaan and the judgment they incurred because their violation of the sexual standards mentioned in Chapter 18 (Lv 18:3; 24-30). Although the context is aimed specifically at Israel, by way of an implicit universal principle, all of humanity is bound by biblical sexual ethics. Both preceding and subsequent revelation substantiate this universal ethic.

McQuilkin's questions are as follows: 1) Does the context limit the recipient or application?; 2) Does subsequent revelation limit the recipient or the application?; 3) Is the specific teaching in conflict with other biblical teaching?; 4) Is the reason for the principle given in Scripture, and is that reason treated as normative?; 5) Is the specific teaching normative as well as the principle?; 6) Does the Bible treat the historical context as normative?; 7) Does the Bible treat the cultural context as limited? In each case McQuilkin gives a more detailed explanation with numerous Scriptural examples cited.

6.4.3 Does subsequent revelation limit the recipient or application in anyway?

The very nature of progressive revelation sometimes leads to limits on earlier revelation given (Kuske, 1994:102-103; Larkin, 1988:318; McQuilkin, 1992:283; Shealy, 2002:185; Zuck, 1995:284). Paul illustrates this principle well in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 in the context of the man who was in an incestuous relationship with his step-mother. This was a direct violation of Leviticus 18:7-8 and 20:11. Regarding the civil punishment of this capital offense (Lv 20:11) Paul cites Deuteronomy 17:7 when telling the Corinthians to immediately expel this man from their midst (1 Cor 5:13). It is here that Paul applies the command indirectly urging ecclesiastical excommunication instead of execution (1 Cor 5:5, 13; cf. Lv 18:7; 20:11). In this instance progressive revelation has limited the application. In the case of the sacrificial and ceremonial laws of the Old Testament, Hebrews 9-10 patently sets those aside given the finality of Christ's supreme sacrifice being realized at the cross. So, while a New Covenant believer still needs sacrifice, it is only the finished work of Jesus that is applied "once for all"! It is obvious that not everything in Scripture directly applies in the New Covenant context. But it is the biblical context itself that decides this.

In keeping with the example of Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, and the near context of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, the Levitical prohibition against homosexuality is sustained throughout the Bible. Yet, like the example of the man in an incestuous relationship, the civil sentence of capital punishment is suspended because the church is a non-theocratic, non-Mosaic covenanted, non-nationalistic entity. Therefore, as with the example above, the church has church discipline and excommunication for sexually erring members. In the instance of unbelievers, the Christian has the gospel of Jesus Christ to proclaim. For it must be remembered, homosexuality is but the symptom of a far greater problem — constitutional sin which should only be addressed by redeeming grace.

6.4.4 Is this specific teaching in conflict with other biblical teaching?

The criterion here is related to the consistency and harmony of Scripture (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:791; Shealy, 2002:185; Tiessen, 1993:200-202). Tiessen (1993:200) states it this way, "Universal norms are identifiable by their consistency throughout progressive revelation of the divine will". If the ethical requirement is consistent throughout the whole Bible, then it definitely inclusively applies: If the injunction is constant throughout Scripture, then it is obligatory throughout all history for all people (Tiessen, 1993:200).

As this applies to the issue of homosexuality, it is certain that homosexuality is inclusively proscribed throughout history for all people in all of its forms and variations. The Bible prohibits homosexuality both directly and indirectly through the creation ordinance. Both testaments

speak uniformly negatively about same-sex intercourse. Although there are only seven texts directly related to the subject, there are numerous texts that reaffirm the creation ordinance and generally prohibit all forms of sexual distortion (Mt 19:4-6; Mk 10:2-11; Mk 7:21-22; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gl 5:19; Eph 5:3; 1 Th 4:3-7; Heb 13:4). The pro-gay attempts to rationalize and justify homosexuality in a monogamous same-sex union fail in light of the perspicuity of God's word. If one invoked the pro-gay hermeneutic, one could just as easily relativize the prohibition on fornication, adultery, incest, and bestiality. Homosexuality was sin in antiquity and it is still sin today. Moreover, God's criterion for human sexuality includes more than a "mutually loving, consensual, and committed" relationship.[13] The immutable God of Scripture has not changed his mind on the matter even if current culture has.

6.4.5 Is the reason for the norm given in Scripture, and is the reason treated as normative?

This principle deals with the purpose of the norm that is derived from the text (Felix, 2002:390; Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:791; Shealy, 2002:185). It is illustrated by the conclusion in 1 Peter 5:14 where Peter tells his readers to "Greet one another with a holy kiss". Is this mandated today? Closer analysis of the text and the ancient custom reveals that the basis for the holy kiss was generated by a desire to show fellow believers warm affection toward one another (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:791). The reason for this norm is not given, but there is a general implicit principle for Christians to warmly manifest their love for one another in an appropriate and edifying way. The modern-day equivalent might be a warm handshake, or putting one's arm around a fellow believer, or a similar gesture of warmth and affection. This might vary depending on the culture and people involved. Like all other sexual distortions, homosexuality finds a norm in its violation of creation order.

6.4.6 Is the specific teaching normative, as well as the principle behind it?

One such specific teaching is found in 1 Peter 2:13-15 where Peter commanded his readers to submit to the "king" and then to the "governors". In western democratic styles of government, the monarchy does not directly apply, but the general principle of submitting to governmental powers of whatever sort is still in perpetuity. In relation to this particular interrogative control, there is a related principle stating that universal norms extend from their relationship to creation order (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:792; Tiessen, 1993:194-197). A good example of this is found in 1 Timothy 2:12-14 and the role of women in the church. Paul defends a functional hierarchy in relationship to women teaching in a mixed setting. He does this in direct relationship to creation order before the fall. In spite of what evangelical feminists and

[13] See Kostenberger's (2004:224-225) table related to the Bible's unified condemnation of homosexuality.

egalitarians might say, the direct link this passage has to the creation account means that the principle is grounded in original creation and is, therefore, universal, not local.[14] Therefore, both the teaching and the principle are valid today.

In relation to homosexuality, there is a direct identification with creation order in Romans 1:26-27 — a passage that has an implicit link to the Levitical passages (Lv 18:22; 20:13). This was dealt with in Chapter 5 of this research (5.3.1). Paul's point there is that human rebellion against God is expressed in direct violation of creation order. On this basis, God hands over such a society to this distortion of creation as a form of judgement. Homosexuality stands as a graphic illustration and symbol of this rejection of what God ordained from the beginning. Closely associated with created order and homosexuality's affiliation to it, is the Lord's teaching on marriage and its obvious correlation to creation order (Mt 19:4-6; Mk 10:2-11). Christ's reaffirmation of creation order in marriage and sexuality has far-reaching repercussions which extend to other sexually related issues like homosexuality. Thus, the normativity of heterosexual morality is organically and intrinsically bound to creation order (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:792). Homosexuality, therefore, is a straightforward transgression of this universal moral axiom, which is rooted in creation order.

6.4.7 Does the Bible treat the historic context as normative?

This guideline is best explained by McQuilkin (1984:235) who maintains "An event of specific behavior should not be considered normative on the sole basis that it is recorded in the Bible. It must be evaluated in light of direct biblical teaching." In an inspired Bible, this means that the speeches of Job's friends are historically accurate even though they were wrong responses. Consequently, they are not normative today. Likewise the historical context of a passage like Exodus 3:5 cannot be duplicated today. So the interpreter must exercise great care and caution in examining the specific context of any passage being considered, and then examine the larger context to make such a determination.

In reference to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the historic context is unique to the ancient Hebrew and cannot be duplicated today. Many of the sexual laws commanded in Leviticus 18 had direct application to a household setting that most in the west are unfamiliar with in modern culture. Yet the universal principle remains even though its application will be tailored for current conditions.

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[14] See Felix's (2002:373-405) article *The Hermeneutics of Evangelical feminism* and his extended discussion of this vigorously debated issue in 1 Timothy 2:12-14.

6.4.8 Does the Bible treat the cultural context as limited?

The whole issue of culture, both past and present, is a complex discussion on its own. Again, McQuilkin (1984:236; 1992:286-293) notes that the wide array of definitions given for culture includes the elements of human behaviour, morals, values, and a way of doing things. Because the bulk of Scripture addresses human behaviour, McQuilkin (1984:237) says it is aimed at culture.[15] Here the context is invaluable in evaluating the nature of the culture surrounding the text. As an example of this, polygamy in the Bible normally goes unevaluated. Does this mean God approved of it? Does silence equate to approval of a normative principle? Certainly narrative literature, in which these polygamy passages are located, is implicitly making an assessment. Given the numerous complications and compounded problems polygamy presents in Scripture, these narrative passages make a negative statement about polygamy ever ending in "happily ever after". Then, the broader context of creation order and subsequent revelation remove all doubt that the culture of polygamy is not normative.

In concert with the Ancient Near Eastern culture, today there are many parallels related to human hamartiology and the sinful tendency to distort the divine gift of human sexuality. Accordingly, the same universal sexual ethic that governed the ancients still governs modern generations.

6.4.9 How does the principle correspond to present-day culture?

How does the meaning derived from the text and its undergirding principle correspond to the contemporary setting in which the interpreter lives (Kostenberger & Patterson, 2011:791)? Regarding the matter of eating meat offered to idols, 1 Corinthians 8 may not have a direct connection with modern western culture, although there may be points of identification in third world settings where animistic and polytheistic religions thrive. Yet there is an implicit principle about doing anything that may make a weaker brother or sister stumble. This could be something like a mature believer exercising their liberty to have an alcoholic beverage in front of someone who was redeemed from a life of alcoholism.

In the advice of Larkin (1988:356): "Identify the contemporary situation to which the commands, promises, statements of truth, or principles from narrative examples can be applied … [Then] find similarities between the historical context of the ancient text and the similarities of contemporary circumstances."

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[15] McQuilkin (1984:237) relates how history differs from culture in that "historical events are often demonstrated to be acts of God but revelation simply records the setting".

Where homosexuality is concerned, there is a very pronounced present-day prominence given to this issue.[16] The daily headlines remind this current generation of the undeniable moral transformation culture and society are presently undergoing. This one issue has dominated the news for the last 15 years with increasing frequency and fervour. The church at large has not been left unaffected as congregations and denominations split over the issue of same-sex marriage and its sanction in Christianity. Families are often divided and confused because a loved one who declares their same-sex preference. Most people find the whole matter distressing and awkward, unsure how to respond. Homosexuality, and all it represents in the sexual revolution, is a prominent cultural, political, moral, and ecclesiastical issue that is here to stay. The question is how are individual Christians and churches meant to respond? What does a biblical response look like?

6.10 How does the interpreter develop a practical response to a biblical principle?

When the meaning of the text is ready to be applied what things should the interpreter keep in mind? It is at this stage that the current culture needs to be scrutinized as modern thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours of Christians and non-Christians alike are examined (Larkin, 1988:357). When applying a direct or explicit command, the action required is a straightforward application based on the normativity of the principle. The command "Do not steal" may apply to many areas, but the general directive is quite obvious. In the instance of a more implicit principle, the required action will be selected from modern culture. Paul's imperative in Ephesians 6:5 for "slaves to submit to their masters" does not have a direct modern-day corollary in western-style culture. But a close analogue is seen in the employee and employer relationship, or the soldier and commander relationship in the military.

With respect to homosexuality in the present culture, the response to this prominent moral question will be varied and measured depending on the context. DeYoung (2015) answers this question on several levels.[17] The response of a parent to a child who declares their homosexuality will be different than a church's response to special interest lobbies pressuring a church or denomination to perform same-sex weddings. There is no one-size-fits-all approach

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[16] See Bell (1998:220-249) for a good evaluation of ancient Graeco-Roman sexual morals in the 1st Century CE Bell's insightful assessment demonstrates a good number of parallels between that ancient past and today. While 2000 years have passed, many sinful expressions remain much the same.

[17] The e-book format of DeYoung's book does not include page numbers. In appendix 3 of his book DeYoung discusses the multipronged, multileveled response Christians need to think through as they address homosexuality from a biblical perspective: "So how ought we to speak about homosexuality? Should we be defiant and defensive or gentle and entreating? Yes and yes. It depends on who is listening. All six scenarios above are real and not uncommon. And while some Christians may be called to speak to one group in particular, we must keep in mind that in this technological day and age anyone from any group may be listening in. This means that we will often be misunderstood." He goes to explain what he means in the text that follows this quote.

given the enormity of the issue and the moral confusion it invites. The one common denominator in this is that homosexuality is a departure from God's established boundaries for the one-man-one-woman mandate instituted at creation. This is an absolute universal, uniform, and univocal truth for the ages. Present-day moral revisionism does not negate this ethical norm.

Upon scrutinizing the universal heterosexual norm for marriage and sexuality from the Bible within the framework of the applicational controls above, the proscription of homosexuality should be without question. In light of this enduring ethic, how does this specifically apply to the present situation modern culture faces? This will be discussed now.

6.5 Specific application for the 21st century

It has already been stated more than once that there is a lasting universal moral that prohibits all homosexuality in every age for all people. Yet this one issue has been in the cultural limelight, garnering daily headlines and news clips.[18] The entertainment industry has capitalized on this moral momentum and now includes homosexual and transgender themes in the vast majority of television dramas, sitcoms, and talk shows. The necessary corollary of same-sex marriage has produced its share of headlines and cultural division as homosexual activists push for what they call "marriage equality". This has left no sector of modern society untouched by the implications of redefining marriage. High profile clerics, like Desmond Tutu, have joined the ranks of homosexual advocacy promoting the legalization of same-sex unions with the caveat "As long as it is loving, monogamous, and consenting".[19] Those who disagree with the popular gay trends are ridiculed and marginalized for taking, what they believe, is a moral stand grounded in the Bible. Things have now reached the stage where debate on this issue is now tantamount to hate. So how does a modern Christian apply this unpopular but abiding principle proscribing homosexuality? Based on the popular magnitude of the issue, this could be a research project on its own. Therefore, what follows are a few practical examples that demonstrate how the interpreter might apply the principle proscribing homosexuality.

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[18] This writer has been archiving popular articles and headlines on homosexuality and same-sex marriage for 10 years now, and has thousands articles from all around the world that represent the magnitude and force of this one issue. Those who closely follow this issue know that revising sexual morality, gender distinction, monogamy, and marriage will affect all of society. Transvaluating God's creation order has far reaching implications that society has only begun to feel now.

[19] Just as this writer was in the final stages of preparing this manuscript, Al Mohler released a brand new book *We cannot be silent* (2015) which catalogues the magnitude of this current moral revolution. Mohler's assessment is both timely and cogent as he states not only the problem the church faces, but also how the church should respond to the multipronged complexities this one issue of homosexuality presents. This writer's copy of Mohler's new book is an unpaginated e-book form.

6.5.1 Specific applications for the church of Jesus Christ

One luxury the church does not have is to ignore homosexuality and same-sex marriage. Whether church leaders like it or not, homosexuality must be confronted and a response offered. At its core, the issue of homosexuality is an either/or decision, not a both/and compromise. There is no third way afforded today's believer where homosexuality is concerned. To opt for neutrality is not possible. In the end, silence on homosexuality amounts to tacit approval. Many churches have already come out as "inclusive and affirming" of homosexuality. Others have stood fast against the cultural tide clinging to the moral principles outlined in Scripture. Still there is confusion and awkwardness regarding how Christians should respond to this significant moral issue. Whatever else an ecclesiastical response looks like, it must be balanced.

MacArthur (2008:172) explains what this balance looks like: "In reality, the Bible calls for a balance between what some people think are two opposing reactions — condemnation and compassion. Really, the two together are essential elements of biblical love, and that's something the homosexual sinner desperately needs." Likewise, Kostenberger (2004:225) adds that violating the creation order and ordinance is not an option in any age, so conceding biblical principles associated with homosexuality is hardly a balanced view.

In an effort to find biblical balance, the following representative examples are given to illustrate specifically applying the meaning of the text condemning homosexuality:

- The church must expose homosexuality as sin against God.[20] It is no more loving to affirm and encourage a homosexual in their sin than it is to affirm and encourage an adulterer, fornicator, incestuous person, zoophile, or paedophile in their respective sins. The many passages that have been cited and explored in this research should certainly be taught and explained in detail to all who will listen. In the end, the writer of Hebrews cautions that "Marriage is to be held in honour among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (13:4).

- The church must extend the grace of God to homosexuals. Like a coin, the other side of the balanced response to the homosexual issue is one of grace. Like the Lord himself, the church's reply should always be one that is commingled with an equal amount of grace and truth (Jn 1:14). The redeeming and sustaining grace of God should be offered to those who

[20] The following applications to the church are based in part upon Montoya's two journal articles: *The Church's response to Homosexuality* (Montoya, 2008:233-248); and *Homosexuality and the Church* (Montoya, 2000:155-168).

struggle with same-sex desires and activity. As Christopher (2009:64-65) says, "Homosexuality is not a greater sin than other sins and does not require a different plan on God's part to save and redeem … there is more grace in God than there is sin in your past! As someone once said, 'He is a better Saviour than you are a sinner'! The message of amazing grace is exactly what the church needs to promote and practice."

- The church must consider church discipline for church members who remain impenitently homosexual (Mt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:1-13). Although this may sound harsh and unloving, it should be remembered that church discipline is not meant to be a punitive measure. On the contrary, church discipline is aimed at being restorative and reconciliatory; restoring and reconciling the sinner to intimate communion with God and warm fellowship with the church. When a church expels an impenitent member they are collectively declaring that they can no longer affirm that person's profession of faith in Christ. Should the homosexual repent, then that person will be restored to full fellowship and favour, and offered the biblical counsel needed to combat besetting same-sex desires.[21] It needs to be stressed that this only applies to church members who have made a public declaration of saving faith in Jesus Christ. Whereas the response to the unbelieving homosexual is evangelistic in nature.

- Churches must teach their people the whole counsel of God concerning gender distinction, sexuality, marriage and family. Christians need to be reminded of the biblical definitions of marriage and family. The advent of same-sex marriage signifies that marriage has been arbitrarily redefined. This redefinition indicates the essential nature of marriage has now been relativized to mean nothing and everything at the same time.[22] To change the nature of marriage has numerous practical implications — too many to mention here — for the whole of society and culture: gender redefinition is up for grabs, tax codes and equality codes have to necessarily change, same-sex parenting is now a reality, adoption laws are altered, gender pronouns give rise to a new gender neutral lexicon, education includes pro-gay curriculum, transgenderism is now the next moral horizon, other matrimonial permutations have to now be considered, religious liberty is imperilled, free speech is stifled under the

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[21] For an excellent and practical treatment on church discipline, the little book by Jonathan Leeman (2012) *Church discipline: How the Church protects the Name of Jesus* is recommended. Also see Hummel (1975:166-174) regarding church discipline. In this writer's 22 years of ministerial experience, most churches do not practice biblical church discipline. And many who do practice some form of it use it as a weapon to punish those who wilfully live in sin. Perhaps if the church had been disciplining adulterers, fornicators, and those seeking unbiblical divorces all along, Christianity might have more moral authority where homosexuality is concerned.

[22] The following sources are helpful in explaining just what is at stake in the cultural and moral debate surrounding the normalizing of homosexuality and same-sex marriage: Chipeur, 2012:265-274; Davidson, 2012b:187-208; Reinach, 2012:229-264; and Reisman, 2010:1-406.

guise of “hate speech laws”, and the sexual revolution is granted greater credence.[23] And so the church needs faithful pastors who teach the whole counsel of God’s word on these matters, equipping their congregations to face this daily barrage.[24] It is the church’s divine mandate to be instant in season and out of season on the issues of the day (2 Tm 4:1-5). Even when it isn’t popular or appreciated.[25]

- The church must prepare to counsel those who struggle with same-sex attraction and sexual brokenness.[26] As societal approval for all things sexual advances, this will of necessity produce more and more people who will become causalities of the prevailing philosophy of erotic liberties, both within and without the church. Many will be seeking help and guidance in dealing with the besetting sin of sexual deviancy. Church leaders must maintain their own sexual purity while equipping themselves to deal with those who seek to free themselves from sexual enslavement.[27]

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[23] In his book on same-sex marriage, Christopher (2009:101-118) concluded his work with a chapter entitled *Heads up from the headlines*, which detailed how the homosexual revolution and its corollary, same-sex marriage, serve as the tip of the spear for the sexual revolution. The advent of same-sex marriage includes far more than just homosexuality as every relational combination and sexual deviancy is now a possibility.

[24] See Busenitz (2008:203-216) *Marriage and homosexuality: Toward a biblical understanding*; also Holland (2008:217-231) *Parenting and Homosexuality*. One of the aspects of marriage many do not adequately understand relates to the area of marriage as a covenant — see Tarwater (2006:1-136) *Marriage as covenant: Considering God’s design and the contemporary moral consequences;* Finally, Kostenberger’s (2004:1-425) work *God, marriage, and family: rebuilding the biblical foundation.* These are all good resources to aid church leaders in the equipping process while aiding church members to face the rapidly changing moral landscape.

[25] Living in South Africa adds a unique piquancy to the church’s mandate to inform her people, because of the African view on homosexuality. Masase (2009:1-122) addresses the African view from the Venda perspective. In large measure the African view on homosexuality has been influenced more by African culture than Scripture.

[26] In part, this entails helping the homosexual to see that it is dangerous to base one’s entire identity on a perceived sexual orientation. As Gagnon (2005a:293-303) explains, once one is “in Christ” their identity is to be completely surrendered to this new identity which is “in Christ”, not “in the World”.

[27] Peter Hubbard’s (2013:1-174) book *Love into light: The gospel, the homosexual and the Church* is a very helpful counselling resource. This resource is particularly timely because Hubbard approaches the topic from a biblical counselling standpoint with the gospel as the remedy. Another valuable resource in counselling same-sex attraction is Welch’s *Blame it on the brain?* Especially his chapter on homosexuality (Welch, 1998:151-181). There is much to commend in Welch’s article to guide church leaders in dealing with those from a homosexual background. The compendium *The complete guide to understanding homosexuality: A biblical and compassionate response to same-sex attraction*, by Dallas and Heche (2010:1-492) (eds.), has much to commend it. Also the two works of Rosaria Butterfield (2012 and 2015) , a onetime English Literature professor and lesbian activist who made the journey from sexual darkness to the light of Christ! See her first work *The secret thoughts of an unlikely convert* and her latest book *Openness unhindered: Further thoughts of an unlikely convert on sexual identity and union with Christ*. This writer has both works in Kindle e-book format so the page numbers are not available. But these two works will encourage any person struggling with same-sex attraction. For those who need more specialist help related to homosexuality and transgenderism, see Heimbach’s (2014) final appendix *There’s help if you’re looking.* This researcher also has this in Kindle e-book format, so there are no page numbers. But Heimbach’s final chapter includes a long list of evangelical ministries equipped to help individuals or churches with counselling advice and resources. There is help and recent resources for those who do not know where to turn for help.

- The church must protect itself from those who seek to use homosexuality and same-sex marriage to punish the church for its disapproval of the same. Church leaders need to indemnify their individual churches against litigation for disciplining erring church members in this area. With this in mind, leaders need to revisit their church constitutions and by-laws stating their biblical position on gender, gender distinction, gender roles, a definition of biblical marriage, and the marriage practices of the church and pastor. This should also address the rules related to the usage of the church property and premises for matrimonial occasions. Although there are no guarantees, well-worded statements on these points may serve to shield the church from either civil or even criminal litigation — in the case of hate speech laws aimed to limit teaching against homosexuality.[28]

- The church must resist the assault of the homosexual community and lobby against the church and society. Church leaders cannot afford to be ignorant of what is taking place in society. The notion that says "If we leave them alone, they will leave us alone" is naïve and irresponsible. Books like *After the Ball: How America will conquer its fear and hatred of Gays in the 90s,* by Kirk and Madsen (1990:1-398), outline the homosexual agenda, which has been closely followed and hugely successful. In pages 172-189, Kirk and Madsen discuss "The Overhauling of Straight America" and offer the following strategy: (1) talk about gays and gayness as loudly and often as possible; (2) always portray gays as victims, not as aggressors; (3) give gay protectors and allies a just cause; (4) make gays look good; and (5) always make the victimizers look bad.

  Whatever one might think about such a methodology, it cannot be denied the plan was effective. So, unless the church is wise to the manifesto behind the homosexual movement, she will be unprepared and largely ineffectual. Here it must be said, the church should adopt the posture of Nehemiah of old who held a sword in one hand and trowel in the other, building and defending simultaneously — except in this case the church has the Bible as both sword and trowel.

- The church must define, reaffirm, teach, and practice the biblical definition of marriage before an unbelieving world.[29] Because the church is the custodian of the Bible, by default

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[28] See Heimbach (2004:376-467) for various evangelical statements on human sexuality. This may serve as a guide for others to follow similar wording. Also see Grudem (2004:537-540, 703-766) for gender statements of various churches and denominations. Beyond this, seeking professional legal advice on the wording of such statements is recommended, so that the legal particularities of each jurisdiction are duly considered and addressed.

[29] It is recognized that this point is redundant of the 4th practical response given above it. But in light of the significance custodianship given to the church regarding marriage, it is thought this principle needs underscoring and restating from a somewhat different angle and emphasis. The accent here is on the church's obligation to protect and promote the biblical definition of marriage.

she is also the guardian and protectorate of marriage and family, both in word and deed. Sadly, the church has shirked her obligation in this arena by turning a blind eye, in many cases, to the pervasive divorce and remarriage culture. How many churches simply ignore couples who cohabitate together out of wedlock? How many church couples ended up in divorce court without the church ever intervening or applying church discipline? Christopher (2009:58-63) draws attention to this problem and offers a partial remedy and corrective, which includes much of what has already been mentioned. His remedy includes specific and concentrated training and teaching on the subject of gender, sexuality, and marriage because, "Scripturally saturated minds are powerful agents for change when combined with transformed hearts" (Christopher, 2009:62). In matters of marriage and family, the church must maintain a witness of salt and light to counter the moral decay and spiritual darkness of the sexually "enlightened" world. In this the church should lead the world by distinction, not follow by duplication.

6.5.2 The individual Christian's response

In many respects, the individual Christian's practical response will mimic the church's application. But there are a couple key concrete applications that believers need to think through and apply:

- The individual Christian must become informed about homosexuality and its full range of implications for life and living. In part, this means belonging to a Bible-believing congregation that preaches the whole counsel of God's word, encouraging godly application of what is taught. Such a church can suggest resources and helps to aid the individual in personal study of the issue from a biblically-balanced perspective. This is a new day and brave new world. The hands of the clock cannot be turned back to a simpler time. Therefore, preparation, planning, and praying are vital components for the believer's spiritual warfare related to homosexuality and its many consequences for society and culture.

- The individual Christian must plan to encounter the effects and ramifications of political homosexuality. In some way, everyone in western culture will be impacted on some level by the new transvalued morality. It is inescapable. Many believers will be confronted with a friend, neighbour, colleague, or loved one who will declare they are gay or transgender. How does one respond in the moment of such a revelation? The general answer to that question is to be circumscribed by the truth and grace God affords through Christ, who is the epitome of truth and grace (Jn 1:14). If the believer exercises truth to the exclusion of grace there is a risk of seeming too harsh; if the believer exercises grace to the omission of truth, there is a great risk of compassion morphing into sentimental compromise. Thus, equilibrium should

be sought.[30] Christians need to realize that such news will result in a changed relationship. But, if the relationship is severed, let it be the homosexual who terminates the relationship because his or her declared sexual preferences have not been affirmed unconditionally.

- The individual Christian must biblically train their children — if they have children — in relation to all the issues related to homosexuality and the promotion of erotic liberties in the culture. This will include teaching one's children the biblical definition of gender, the importance of gender distinction in marriage, the purpose of sexuality, and the purpose, importance, and illustration of marriage as God defines it — all taught in an age appropriate manner. This is all part of the modern believer's *shema* (Dt 6:4-10). Parents have no choice here. If parents do not teach and disciple their children the culture will. In all of this, the parents should belong to a church that supports the biblical definitions given above. It is incongruous for parents to belong to a church that will not aid them, encourage them, and equip them to lead their children in accordance with the biblical principles related to homosexuality.

- The individual Christian must guard the heart and mind against cultural desensitization. The world and the Devil have a way of wearing people down with the incessant bombardment of sinful pursuits (Pr 4:20-27). Given the seriousness of the threat, the believer needs to daily seek those things which are above and set the mind on Christ (Col 3:1-2). Personal preparation and devotion to Christ are vital to maintaining a victorious testimony in this omnisexual world — a world where what was not long ago a vice, is now a virtue.

It is certain, as Montoya (2008:248) warns, that the church "can no longer remain ignorant, deceived, arrogant, or apathetic to this important issue facing it. There are no more 'new worlds' for the modern pilgrim to flee to. The line has been drawn in the sand. The church must do what Jude asked it to do: 'to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints' (Jude 4). Apathy is not an option. Neither is failure." This should underscore the critical import of these practical responses of both the church and person in the pew.

6.6 Summary

These are but a few representative examples of how to practically apply the biblical principle related homosexuality's prohibition. Considering the depth and scope of the issue, much more could be said here. But these instances serve to illustrate how the interpreter of God's word in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 could specifically and practically incorporate the universal timeless principle related to heterosexual sexual normativity in today's context.

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[30] For a more detailed explanation of this, see Christopher (2009:76-79).

So, it is crucial to keep the distinction between meaning and application separate. This distinction should be reflected in the grammatical-historical definition of application. With the definition of application set, the interpreter should then observe some foundational presuppositions while acknowledging basic applicational cautions, before employing the 10 hermeneutical controls. This application process will coalesce to guide the hermeneutical plane safely down onto the runway of application for a clean and smooth landing.

7. EVALUATION OF THE PRO-GAY HERMENEUTIC

Grounded on the previous six chapters, it is now time to evaluate the pro-gay hermeneutic. This is not an easy task, given the complexities and scope of the issue related to the Bible and homosexuality. For this reason, the evaluation offered will be confined to the aspects of pro-gay interpretation that were outlined in Chapter 2. Accordingly, this evaluation will closely follow the outline presented in Chapter 2, beginning with 2.2 and ending with 2.3.5.6. This territory in Chapter 2 covered pro-gay assumptions regarding biblical authority to the terminus of the hermeneutical process: application. Because of the overlap between some of the pro-gay elements of interpretation, not every point will be assessed, nor will this evaluation be exhaustive. Rather, this evaluation will be limited to a representative appraisal of pro-gay hermeneutics as considered in light of the grammatical-historical method of interpretation.

7.1 Assessing pro-gay assumptions regarding biblical authority

As stated at the beginning of Chapter 2 (2 and 2.1), the interpreter's starting point is all-important, because it will ultimately determine the conclusion. And while every interpreter begins the hermeneutical process with assumptions, it is also true that not all assumptions are equal. This is clearly seen with the pro-gay starting point. The primary pro-gay presupposition begins with a diminished view of biblical authority, i.e., their outlook regarding biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Scriptures. Armed with cultural concerns and social-scientific methodologies, pro-gay interpreters begin with present-day assumptions superimposed on the Bible, subjugating it to their preconceived notions. This is something that every grammatical-historical scholar surveyed for this dissertation discussed (Baily, 2005:254; Burk, 2010:217; Christopher, 2010:35-39; Haas, 1999:1; Peterson, 2004:2; Ross, 2002:347; Taylor, 1995:8; Ukleja, 1983:259; White & Niell, 2002:15-17). There is a direct relationship between a diminished attitude toward biblical authority and an altered hermeneutic (White & Niell, 2002:15).

As part of their presuppositional framework, pro-gay interpreters begin with the following commitments: (1) differing authorities (2.2.1); (2) a pronounced reliance on historical-critical methodologies (2.2.2); (3) the hermeneutic circle (2.2.3); (4) the reader-response hermeneutic (2.2.4); and (5) a commitment to social-scientific criticism (2.2.5). These prior commitments become the canon by which pro-gay interpreters engage the actual biblical text, and any meaning they exhume is unduly influenced by the interpreter's own horizon.

7.1.1 Assessing differing pro-gay authorities

The crux of the pro-gay assumption on biblical authority (2.2.1) is that they begin with the present culture and current community while distilling past authorial intent of the text. Some pro-gay scholars, like Helminiak (2004:13, 19), are more pronounced in their disdain for inerrancy than others. One obvious example of differing pro-gay authorities is evidenced by Stiebert and Walsh (2001:119-121) with their stated commitment to South Africa's 1997 Constitution. Here they cite "The Bill of Rights" and Section 9 of the Bill of Rights on equality and the later amendment allowing for same-sex marriages. It is from this human rights perspective, defined by the 1997 Constitution, that Stiebert and Walsh then begin their interpretation of the Levitical passages (Lv 18:22; 20:13).

The question that must be asked is whether or not Stiebert and Walsh are judging the culture by the Scriptures, or whether the culture is being allowed to judge the Scriptures in this exercise through a man-made document?[1] On this note, Schaeffer (1984:137) insightfully warned, "… there are others who call themselves evangelical and then affirm the acceptability of homosexuality and even the idea of homosexual 'marriage'. But note: this cannot be done without directly denying the authority of Scripture in the area of sexual morality." He proceeds to then explain the pathology of such a paradigm shift whereby one begins questioning the Bible based on what the world is saying. This then eventuates in subordinating God's word "to whatever view is currently accepted by the world" (Schaeffer, 1984:137). This produces a more relativistic hermeneutic that accommodates the current culture and supplants biblical authority. Ultimately, this is counterintuitive to the counter-cultural nature of the biblical message.

7.1.2 Assessing pro-gay historical-critical methodologies

Pro-gay interpreters are very fond of using the tools from the historical-critical method[2] (2.2.2) as they assert human reason over Scripture, rather than surrendering human reason to the authority of Scripture. At its core, this demonstrates a denial of biblical authority (Rooker, 2000:37). It is here that they place their weight on that of human opinion. As human wisdom is elevated above divine revelation, the Bible is atomized. But in the estimation of Linneman, a

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[1] In his monumental work, *The great evangelical disaster*, Schaeffer (1984:63) states, "It is obeying the Scriptures which is really the watershed. We can say the Bible is without mistake and still destroy it if we bend the Scriptures by our lives to fit this culture instead of judging the culture by Scripture."

[2] To even question historical-critical methods invites the scorn of many scholars who imperiously ridicule those who dare question the established "science" of these methods. Derickson (2003:90) comments that one risks being labelled a "fundamentalist" for calling prevailing scholarship into question: "The recent use of 'fundamentalist' as a pejorative designation has become post-evangelicals' way of justifying their departure from evangelicalism's traditional view of Scripture and silencing objectors. If one objects to the theological shift, he is not a modern thinker. He is not progressive. He is not really evangelical. He is a 'fundamentalist' with all its nuances of ignorance, intractableness, and intolerance."

former historical-critical scholar, "the Word of God is homogenous and unified; it is entirely and totally God's Word. To classify its various parts according to our own evaluation system is insolence. It is, nevertheless, standard procedure in historical-critical theology to accord different levels of validity to different portions of God's Word" (Linneman, 2001b:149). This approach negates the supernatural and opens the floodgate for pro-gay interpreters to seek "deeper" meanings from any passage they put under the historical-critical microscope. In effect, this assumes that man is the measure of all things.[3] It all leads to the "syncretistic mixing of Christianity with notions alien to it …" (Linneman, 2001b:39).

7.1.3 Assessing the pro-gay reliance on the hermeneutic circle

By beginning with the present cultural assumption that some forms of homosexuality are morally permissible (White & Niell, 2002:102), many pro-gay interpreters rely heavily on Liberation Theology's hermeneutic circle (2.2.3) to obtain the desired meaning from the text they interpret. This method presupposes a pronounced suspicion of the text in relation to perceived injustices like "heterosexism" and "androcentrism". To remedy this perceived imbalance, pro-gay interpreters replace what they view as a "theology of exclusion" with the more egalitarian "theology of inclusion" (2.3.1.1). The process begins with the interpreter's own experience and travels around the circle until a new interpretation is formulated based on perceived cultural injustices. This new interpretation is then used to challenge the prevailing praxis. The weakness here is that this exalts human experience over Scripture, making experience the determiner of truth. As a close corollary, truth is deemed to be fluid and ever-changing. The best that practitioners of the hermeneutic circle can conclude is that truth is relative and socially constructed. Thus, the interpreter can never arrive at certitude, because the circle is ever ongoing.[4]

7.1.4 Assessing the pro-gay use of reader-response theory

Implicit to the pro-gay hermeneutic is the assumption of the postmodern interpretive tool of reader-response theory (2.2.4). Though there are degrees of this, reader-response presupposes the authority of the reader. It is the reader who helps grant meaning to the text. Correspondingly, the originally intended meaning of the author is ignored. In fact, it is not even a consideration.

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[3] See Linneman (2001b:83-141) for a more detailed examination and assessment of historical-critical methodologies and the dangers they pose. Also, see Linneman's (2001a:1-217) *Biblical criticism on trial: How scientific is "scientific theology"?* for her sober assessment of higher-critical methodologies. Though Linneman's critique is primarily aimed at the New Testament, most of her arguments can be applied to the Old Testament as well.

[4] See Pettigrew (1991:277-287) for a good treatment of Liberation Theology and the hermeneutic circle.

The reader-response method of reading the text poses three glaring interpretational dangers: (1) the real inherent danger in this approach is that the reader can eisegetically impose on the text whatever meaning he or she creatively determines to be correct; (2) another inherent danger of the reader-response method implies that there can be as many interpretations of the same text as there are readers;[5] (3) moreover, the reader-response theory suggests that, divorced from a reader, the text is destitute of meaning. This makes hermeneutics a decidedly anthropocentric enterprise elevating the human aspects of interpretation beyond other dimensions of hermeneutics. Consequently, the reader-response theory implicitly allocates the locus of hermeneutical authority to the realm of the reader in varying degrees. This results in subjective interpretations that are tentative and subject to ongoing change evolving as the cultural conditions evolve.

7.1.5 Assessing the pro-gay use of social-scientific criticism

The pro-gay tool box includes a great deal of reliance on the social sciences like anthropology, political science, and sociology (2.2.5). These are meant to help uncover general patterns that develop models of how people interact within social groups (Yamauchi, 1984:176).[6] The two dominant models utilized by pro-gay scholars are the purity/pollution motif of Douglas, and the honour-shame paradigm of the Ancient Near East.

While there are many problems associated with reliance upon the social sciences, there is the positive yield of some general patterns which emerge from their use (Yamauchi, 1984:191). Some of the data supplied have real benefit when applied with care. Kuske (1994:83) cautions that there is value in "'the data gathered by' and not 'the conclusions drawn by' the sociologist and cultural anthropologist." So it is best to rely on these methods in a limited way (Dvorak, 2007:278).

Yet, as already mentioned, the social-scientific problems here are numerous: (1) they are informed by the very humanistic and anthropocentric presuppositions of the sociologists (Dvorak, 2007:251-253; Yamauchi, 1984:176-177) – these influences come from Marxism, psychology, evolutionary theory, and existentialism; (2) there are many disputable theories and weak models based on hypotheses (Yamauchi, 1984:180); (3) the results are often reductionistic, over-interpreting the models and the data yielded (Dvorak, 2007:277; Yamauchi, 1984:180); (4) among sociologists there is the myth of neutrality as personal bias influences the outcomes (Yamauchi, 1984:181); (5) there is a built-in determinism with God's image-bearing

[5] See Maimela and König (1998) for their survey of the multitude of hermeneutical approaches now employed to interpret the Bible.

[6] See Footnote 9 in Chapter 2 for a further description of social-scientific criticism.

creatures being viewed as “socially” or “psychologically” determined (Yamauchi, 1984:181), which results in a mechanistic conclusions; (6) there is an appeal and emphasis on novelty with ideological bias fostering creative biblical reconstructions disregarding both the Bible and archaeology (Yamauchi, 1984:183); (7) there is the danger of confusing “what is” with “what ought” and politicizing that confusion (Yamauchi, 1984:190); (8) there is the concern of anachronistically using present models to inaccurately interpret the past by replacing exegesis with eisegesis (Dvorak, 2007:277-278); and (9) there is a tendency to erase biblical distinctives and deny the supernatural elements of Scripture (Yamauchi, 1984:191).

All of this is why Kuske (1994:83) warns that “most conclusions drawn from the data by these specialists are influenced by their worldly, humanistic viewpoint. But the data they gather simply reflect how people in a given culture think and communicate.” So, rather than ignoring the social sciences, the grammatical-historical scholar needs to exercise discernment and diligence when relying on such sociological tools, so that they do not unnecessarily determine the outcome of textual meaning.

The result of the above foundational presuppositions innate to pro-gay interpreters leads to a relativistic method of interpretation. Consequently, this replaces the author’s intended meaning with that of the interpreter. In the pro-gay interpreter’s quest to be culturally sensitive to the present-day considerations, the meaning of the passage under examination is eclipsed and exchanged for that of the interpreter. This promotes a situation where the current culture replaces the objective ethical absolutes of Scripture. In Oswalt’s (1979:76) estimation of pro-gay relativism and moral pluralism, he concludes, “We may accept the Bible’s authority over us or we may deny that authority. If we choose the latter, let us say so. Let us say the Bible does not speak to our age and be done with it.”[7]

7.2 Assessing pro-gay contextual assumptions

Pro-gay interpreters begin their hermeneutical process with the above basal assumptions, building their hermeneutic from there based on a what amounts to replacing divine revelation with human reason and the subjectivity of philosophical relativism. In 2.3.1.1 of this dissertation, this was explored more fully. But because of the overlap with 7.1, no further comment or evaluation will be offered. Then, in 2.3.1.2, discussed more contextual assumptions regarding the pro-gay assessment of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 were discussed, examining (1) the date of composition for Leviticus; (2) redaction criticism; (3) the frequency of homosexuality in Scripture; and (4) the nature of the proscribed acts. Because Footnote 16 of Chapter 2 adequately

[7] See John Woodbridge’s (1982:1-237) valuable assessment of biblical authority in church history in his response to the Roger and McKim’s proposal, *Biblical authority: Infallibility and inerrancy in the Christian tradition*.

addresses the date of Levitical composition, no further evaluation will be offered here beyond the reminder of the speculative nature of this pro-gay assumption. The issue of redaction criticism was sufficiently addressed in 7.1.2, so it would be redundant to assess it again. What remains, then, is to evaluate pro-gay arguments in relation to the frequency with which homosexuality is directly mentioned in Scripture, and then to assess the nature of the proscribed homosexual acts in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Additionally, 2.3.2 with its emphasis on the pro-gay use of specific social-scientific models will be critiqued.

7.2.1 Assessing the pro-gay assertion of homosexuality's lack of mentionable frequency

As was seen in 2.3.1.1, pro-gay scholars like to bring up the issue of the lack of direct mention of homosexuality in the Bible. There are only seven direct citations referencing some form of homosexuality in both testaments (Gn 19:1-11; Lv 18:22; 20:13; Jdg 19-20; Rm 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9; and 1 Tm 1:10).[8] Based on the paucity of mention, pro-gay interpreters assume it is not that great of an issue. So, how does the grammatical-historical interpreter respond? First, it should be noted that every mention of homosexuality in the Bible is categorically negative. There is nothing in those direct references that ever hints that some forms of homosexuality are more acceptable than others. The Bible is consistently negative in its condemnation of homosexuality. Then, the question that pro-gay interpreters must honestly answer is: How many times must a prohibition be mentioned in Scripture before it is to be taken seriously? It is Baily (2005:249) who observes that Leviticus 19:18 is only mentioned once in the Old Testament and is not mentioned again until the Gospels, in the book of Luke (10:35-38). Does this mean the modern-day Christian can ignore the injunction to love their neighbour? Also, by use of pro-gay logic, one could conclude that since there are only four prohibitions of bestiality (Ex 22:19; Lv 18:23; 20:15-16; Dt 27:21) in the Old Testament, with no explicit mention of it in the New Testament, that this somehow indicates permission of the same. In the case of paedophilia, there are no biblical references to this sexual distortion; using pro-gay logic one could easily conclude that complete silence equals permission. It is doubted that any pro-gay scholars would be willing to justify paedophilia based on an argument from silence.

7.2.2 Assessing pro-gay assumptions regarding the nature of the proscribed acts

It is the pro-gay contention that the nature of the male-male acts in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 apply only to the acts themselves and not the attitudes behind the act (2.3.1.1). Therefore, it is maintained, Leviticus only proscribes cultic and liturgical violations of same-sex activity. Predicated on this, the homosexuality condemned in Leviticus was meant to warn Israel against the religious sexual customs of their pagan neighbours. Admittedly, the texts are not explicit on

[8] Deuteronomy 23:17-18 is disputed among pro-gay interpreters as to whether it refers to cultic male-male prostitution or not.

this. But this in itself is not determinative. Why? Because there are a number of factors that must be considered on the whole issue of sexual orientation[9] and the claimed science[10] behind it:

1. As with social-scientific criticism, the popular statistical and scientific data behind homosexuality cannot make a moral judgment about what is right or wrong (Taylor, 1995:7). At best, social-scientific criticism can only convey "what is", not "what ought" to be.

2. The science on the issue of homosexuality is far from conclusive, as Footnotes 1 and 17 of Chapter 2 indicate. It is imprudent to make such far-reaching pronouncements regarding homosexuality built upon inconclusive science and many subjective implications.

3. Even if some biblical sins were found to have a genetic influence, this would not exonerate the homosexual any more than it would pardon the murderer or thief. Humanity is not excused from personal responsibility for these sins (Schreiner, 2006:72). Moreover, science cannot say how determinative such a genetic link might be, nor can it explain whether a supposed genetic marker is the cause or effect of the sin.

4. Though sexual orientation is never discussed in Scripture, the proscriptions are general enough to include lustful inclinations and the immoral mind-set behind the act (DeYoung, 2000:61; Wold, 1998:22-23). Of course, Jesus extended this thought in Matthew 5:28 when he stressed the attitude as well as the act. So it is tenuous to claim, as pro-gay interpreters do, that homosexuals should not be held accountable for their actions because they were born that way and, therefore, bear no responsibility for their actions.

Wold (1998:22) challenges this pro-gay assumption, concluding that "the Bible speaks directly to the matter of consensual sex between males. It is not optional to think otherwise. Homosexual conduct falls into the category of deliberate action against the divine standard expressed by the law". So, the notion that the only thing Leviticus proscribed was sacralised homosexuality, like that practiced by the ancient pagans, e.g. the Canaanites, is another attempt to confine the text, making it conform to modern cultural sentiment.

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[9] The best article this writer encountered in his research regarding sexual orientation was recently written by Burk: *Is homosexual orientation sinful?* (2015:95-115). He carefully explains the relationship between the modern idea of sexual orientation the Bible's emphasis on immoral lust and desires.

[10] While this dissertation does not adequately address the science behind the present promotions of sexual orientation and homosexuality, the following works, written by scientists, explain the inconclusive nature of the genetic claims offered in the headlines: N.E. & B.K. Whitehead (2013), *My genes made me do it: Homosexuality and the scientific evidence*; Jeffery Satinover, M.D. (1996:1-280), *Homosexuality and the politics of truth*; Mark Yarhouse & Lori Burkett (2003:1-162), *Sexual identity: A guide to living in the time between the times*; Stanton Jones & Mark Yarhouse (2000:1-189), *Homosexuality: The use of scientific research in the church's moral debate*; Matthew Standford(2010:1-166) , *The biology of sin: Grace, hope, and healing for those who feel trapped*; and NARTH (2009:1-121), *What research shows: NARTH's response to the APA claims on homosexuality*.

7.2.3 Assessing the pro-gay use of specific social-scientific models

In their appraisal of the culture and history of Ancient Near Eastern sexual customs, pro-gay interpreters use some of the social-scientific models in their exegetical examination of the Levitical texts (Lv 18:22; 20:13). In Chapter 2 (2.3.2), three of these models were investigated and explained: (1) the purity/pollution motif of Douglas (2.3.2.1); (2) the honour-shame theme of Stiebert and Walsh (2.3.2.2); and (3) Olyan's similar usage of the honour-shame paradigm. Because of the overlap between the two uses of the honour-shame model, both will be treated together.

7.2.3.1 Assessing the use of the purity/pollution paradigm

Anthropologist Mary Douglas developed a rather complex theory to help explain the Mosaic laws in Leviticus. This was discussed earlier in Chapter 2 (2.3.2.1). The essence of Douglas's theory is that all living creatures conform to certain characteristics. Those creatures that violate these patterned categories are then deemed defiling and classified as dirt, or matter that is out of place (Klawans, 2000:8). This is a model that almost every pro-gay interpreter depends upon as part of their presuppositional tool chest. And, although it is an interesting theory with a measure of plausibility, it is another example of the overuse of social-scientific criticism. Some assessment was offered in Chapter 2 in both footnotes 10 and 20.

In responding to the claims of Douglas, the weaknesses of her motif should be carefully considered before accepting her entire premise, which is bathed in humanistic anthropology. One of the greatest deficiencies of her model is that it restricts the categories delineated to the time, place, and people of ancient Israel. There are no universal anomalies; everything is culturally and traditionally proscribed. Furthermore, Douglas's underlying presupposition is that impurity systems, like those of the ancient Hebrews, are always motivated by oppression and patriarchal concerns. These oppressive societies exert power by closely identifying impurity with sin (Klawans, 2000:9). Beyond this, Douglas incongruously parallels the Levitical laws with more recent tribal customs. She does not offer any ancient comparisons, like the Hittites (Harris, 1990:526). When Douglas examines Leviticus 18-20, she confuses what is moral with that which is ritual. In this, she reduces moral laws to mere purity transgressions, working on the assumption that Leviticus 15 is the same as Leviticus 18 (Harris, 1990:527; Klawans, 2000:14). The laws of uncleanness (Lv 11-15) are not in the same category as sexual immorality. It is Kaiser (1994:1076) who observes that Douglas's creation taxonomy of what constitutes "normal" categories runs opposite to the creation account, where all things created were pronounced "good" whether they conformed to the "normality" of a particular class or not. In a concluding comment, Douglas understands the body as providing a basic scheme for all symbolism illustrating society is subjective, with no real basis in the Bible (Harris, 1990:528).

So, while there may be some benefit to employing Douglas's theory, it should not be used dogmatically to produce preconceived outcomes. The problem here is that too many over-apply this model and end up with over-generalized results, which classify the male-male homosexuality prohibition as an ordinary pagan cultic violation — nothing more, nothing less.

7.2.3.2 Assessing the pro-gay reliance on the honour-shame model

A common social-scientific device which is often used by many biblical scholars is the Ancient Near Eastern idea of honour-shame (2.3.2.2 and 2.3.2.3). This cultural construct was implemented to promote and sanction what the community believed was acceptable behaviour. Since honour was a community value, certain actions by an individual could either bring honour or shame on the greater community. Based on the social scientist's reading of the ancient patriarchal cultures, masculinity was thought to be superior to femininity. It is the belief of Stiebert and Walsh (2001:119-152), based on the honour-shame pattern of the Graeco-Roman era, that the passive party in Leviticus 18:22 was deemed guilty for taking the feminine role. For Olyan's part (2.3.2.3), he contends, based on Athens, Rome, and Assyria, that only the active partner was originally guilty in Leviticus 18:22. In spite of the fact that Stiebert and Walsh end up with a differing conclusion from Olyan, both respectively agree that Leviticus 20:13 was a later emendation by later textual editors. This forms the crucial basis for their respective arguments. Also, both parties conclude that the prohibition deals with what is communal shame and a purity or cultic violation.

The grammatical-historical answer to this points out the hasty generalization which seeks to neutralize the moral implications of Leviticus 18:22 with an exaggerated use of the honour-shame motif. The claim is that only shame was incurred, not moral judgment. In both instances, there is an undue reliance on the Graeco-Roman culture's understanding of honour-shame. But unlike ancient Israel, the Graeco-Roman culture regarded religion and sexual morality as completely separate domains (Bell, 1998:224). The Graeco-Roman culture saw morality as the province of the collective wisdom of the community, not some divine authority (Bell, 1998:222).[11] There is also a failure on the part of Stiebert and Walsh, as well as Olyan, to demonstrate the numerous applications of the honour-shame notion around the Ancient Near East and the

[11] In Bell's (1998:222-224) assessment of the Graeco-Roman view of morality, he explains that the Romans of the 1st Century (CE) were motivated by "self-interest and reciprocity". Therefore, they acted in ways that normally benefited self, as long as it did not interfere with somebody else's property rights. Accordingly, adultery was not wrong because it was immoral. Adultery was wrong because it violated another man's property rights. And while the Romans spoke much of morally upright behaviour, they did so in terms of duty, loyalty, prudence, valour, and utility. But this version of Roman morality was prompted by communal convention, not by religion or the gods. After all, the gods were not models of virtue themselves. Therefore, as Bell (1998:224) concludes, "Roman religion was concerned with success, not their sin". As a result of this, the people could not be expected to exceed the moral example of the gods.

Ancient Mediterranean World (Dickson, 2002:365). Honour-shame was not a static, universal concept. On the contrary, it was applied differently to different peoples in different places and times. These dynamic variations defined “honourable” and “dishonourable” uniquely and distinctively. This is never acknowledged by Stiebert and Walsh, nor Olyan. In addition, there is a tendency for both parties to utilize the honour-shame value in a personal and individual way when group honour was the focus and essential to personal honour (Dickson, 2002:352, 355).

Another noted oversight of this particular pro-gay use of honour-shame is that the focus is primarily on distant analogues that have little value when examining Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (Hess, 2008:744). Why do these pro-gay scholars not compare apples with apples, instead of comparing apples to oranges? Ancient Israel is quite remote from the Graeco-Roman world of the 1st century (CE). Finally, Caragounis (2007:56) contends that homosexually had many different faces in the Graeco-Roman world, noting that views of homosexuality were anything but uniform (Caragounis, 2007:30). This is in contrast to the honour-shame construct as statically used by Stiebert and Walsh, as well as Olyan.

The most glaring assumptive deficiency of these pro-gay scholars (Stiebert and Walsh, and Olyan) is their collective assertion that Leviticus 20:13 is a later interpolation. Therefore, they believe it can be dismissed and not considered along with the apodictic mandate of 18:22. But what proof do these scholars offer? None. What feeds this pro-gay conjecture? Is there any empirical evidence or archaeological indication to substantiate the claim? No. Both Hess (2008:743) and Kiuchi (2007:370-371) counter this by explaining that Leviticus 18 and 20 are not independent compositions. More accurately, Hess and Kiuchi state that Leviticus 18 was written from the perspective of familial kinship, whereas chapter 20 stresses the active punishment by the community and God himself. Respectively, these two chapters share many linguistic and stylistic similarities, further confirming that they form a unit. So, what should one conclude? Simply that the claim that Leviticus 20:13 is a later interpolation is purely speculative and without warrant. Yet, robbed of this critical assumption, their respective theses falter.

The summary of the honour-shame standard in the Ancient Near East, as portrayed by pro-gay interpreters, leads to an over-generalized, reductionistic conclusion. It also subjects Scripture to pro-gay-elevated cultural concerns and idle human speculation. By pressing such a broad category too far, they fail to account for variations and degrees of application of honour-shame. In brief, the pro-gay advocates mentioned here do not adequately account for biblical authority and its concrete standards for sexual morality.

7.3 Assessing the pro-gay use of lexical and grammatical rules

When it comes to the hermeneutical consideration of the lexical and grammatical categories of interpretation, pro-gay scholars stand on their above-mentioned preconceived constructs. With these assumptions firmly in place, they examine individual words and syntactical relationships to uncover "meaning" (2.3.3). By closely following the outline from Chapter 2 (2.3.3), an evaluation will now be offered concerning the pro-gay use and understanding of the primary lexical and grammatical factors.

7.3.1 Assessing the pro-gay lexical definition "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה)

The lexical term "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה) is the object of much debate between pro-gay advocates and the grammatical-historical exegetes (2.3.3.1 contra 3.2.3.1). Pro-gay scholars insist that "abomination" in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 has a very narrow range of meaning. It is maintained that the meaning of תּוֹעֵבָה in these contexts is restricted to the spheres of cultic and purity violations, or matters of idolatry. While pro-gay interpreters are not unified on any of the three nuances, on this they are agreed: the meaning of תּוֹעֵבָה is confined to a ritually-based sense that does not convey any ethical overtones. According to the pro-gay rationale, there is no lasting moral significance of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

In contrast (3.2.3.1), grammatical-historical scholarship attributes an obvious, broader meaning to תּוֹעֵבָה (Baily, 2005:250; Davidson, 2007:152; DeYoung, 2000:48; DeYoung, 1987:20; Grisanti, 1997:316), for the following reasons:

1. The wider context of Leviticus is taken into account. This wider context establishes that Leviticus 1-16 deals primarily with the themes of sacrifice, priesthood, and ritual purity, whereas Leviticus 17-26 contains a much greater emphasis on covenantal ethics and personal morality. It is within this ethical framework that the six uses of "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה) are situated (Baily, 2005:250). This surely influences the eventual meaning of the word.

2. The use of "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה) in both its singular (Lv 18:22; 20:13) and plural forms (Lv 18:24-30) is decidedly sexual, as the immediate context indicates. The frequency of the lexeme in the rest of the Old Testament (117 uses) often gives the term a clear moral meaning targeting infractions that include theft, murder, and child immolation (Jr 7:9; Pr 12:22; 12:22; Dt 12:31).

3. The sexually related proscriptions in Leviticus 18 and 20 were not limited to ancient Israel alone, as God judged the surrounding nations (Lv 18:3; 18:24-30) because they too violated

these moral norms (Davidson, 2007:153-154). The same cannot be said about the purity violations of Leviticus 11-15, ceremonial transgression related to the tabernacle and the sacrificial system. It bears repeating that the pagan nations were never held to these standards.

4. The specific emphasis enunciated in Leviticus 18:24-30 and 20:22-23 indicates that the sexual distortions described in the previous verses, including homosexuality, are inherently defiling, not just because they render transgressors ritually unclean (Davidson, 2007:153). There is a distinct moral connotation that attends these sexual sins.

5. As DeYoung (2000:48) explains, nearly two-thirds of the 117 instances of תּוֹעֵבָה in the Old Testament communicate an ethical meaning. This coincides with number two above and should not be ignored.

6. It should always be the immediate and nearby context that helps to determine the actual meaning of any word in a given context (see 3.2.3.1). The textual environment of Leviticus 18-20 assures the exegete that תּוֹעֵבָה, in both its singular and plural forms, has a strong moral emphasis that should not be so easily dismissed (DeYoung, 1985:20).

7. The תּוֹעֵבָה lexeme has a wide enough range to include that which is both aesthetically and morally repulsive. In contrast, its synonym שֶׁקֶץ has a more culturally nuanced usage which is more confined to the purity setting of Leviticus 11-15 (11:10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 23, 41, 42, 43; 20:25; and 20:23 which is more general in nature) (DeYoung, 1985:19).

8. The core meaning of תּוֹעֵבָה can reference persons, things, or practices that offend one's ritual or moral order. At the same time, it delineates a loathing of that affected person, thing, or moral order (Grisanti, 1998:314).

9. תּוֹעֵבָה is a term that identifies that which is incompatible with Yahweh's character and is, therefore, abhorred (Grisanti, 1998:314). This most certainly has moral connotations related to the holiness of God.

In the face of this extensive and defined lexical context, the interpreter can be confident that תּוֹעֵבָה *"*abomination(s)", in the Levitical setting, has a definite moral meaning. The pro-gay limitations of the word to a ritually-based sense do not withstand the grammatical-historical scrutiny of the lexeme in its original and immediate setting. Pro-gay attempts to restrict the word are motivated by relativistic assumptions. This leads to the deconstructed meaning of תּוֹעֵבָה in Leviticus.

7.3.2 Assessing pro-gay grammatical arguments

In Chapter 2, the arguments of four representative pro-gay advocates were surveyed with respect to their unique grammatical positions (2.3.3.2) on the Levitical texts (18:22; 20:13). In keeping with that outline, a brief evaluation of each of these is here considered.

7.3.2.1 Stewart's metonymy view of Leviticus 18:22

One of the views already examined in Chapter 2 was that of Stewart (2.3.3.2.1). His view is what one might call the metonymy view. It is Stewart's opinion that the plural nature of "lyings", found in both Levitical passages, is always equated with incest. This would mean that the father was prohibited from lying with the son as he does with his wife. Stewart severely constricts the meaning of the text here to reach this conclusion. Though it is certainly a novel interpretation, it does not withstand simple grammatical-historical scrutiny, for the following five reasons:

1. Stewart's theory fails to account for the determining context that surrounds Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. The larger context of Leviticus 18 and 20 embraces 18:22 and 20:13 in a context of sexual probity becoming of God's covenant people. If all the other sexual prohibitions are taken literally, at face value, then why a departure where these two verses are concerned? There are no exegetical indicators that warrant Stewart's claim. He does not account for the shift in focus from Leviticus 18:6-18 to the more general, miscellaneous injunctions in 18:19-23.

2. Stewart's claim about the use of metonymy in Leviticus 18:22 is strained[12] (Terry, 1999:160-162; Zuck, 1995:161-165). There is nothing in that text to indicate that figurative language is used. Beyond the euphemisms regarding sexuality, there are no signs of metaphor in these prohibitions.

3. Stewart's claim that "lyings" always corresponds to incest is not in step with noted Old Testament lexicographers who claim otherwise. Both Hamilton (1980:921) and Williams (1997:101-102) confidently maintain that whenever derivatives of שָׁכַב are used in a sexually conditioned context, those relationships are generally illicit — and this is not restricted to incest. This connotation includes both singular and plural renderings of the verb,[13] contradicting Stewart's claim on the particular use of the plural form of the word.

4. Stewart's contention ignores the unique meaning attributed to זָכָר. In Chapter 3 (3.2.3.3), it was indicated that this specific term is a gender-inclusive lexeme circumscribing the entire

[12] See Chapter 2, Footnote 35.
[13] Both scholars see two notable exceptions in Genesis 30:15-16 and 2 Samuel 11:11.

male species — all ages, classes, and ethnicities. So, while the homosexual proscription excludes father-son incest, it also excludes all other varieties of homosexuality affecting all other classifications of male in ancient Israel.

5. The context of Leviticus 20:13 declares the mutual consent of both parties before the punishment is meted out. It is hard to conceive of a son consenting to this violation apart from coercion. This is further proof that Stewart is wide of the mark here.

On all fronts, Stewart is hard pressed to support his assertions lexically, grammatically, and contextually. This is another example of subjective assumptions influencing textual meaning.

7.3.2.2 Olyan's active male emphasis

Another syntactical perspective on Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is promoted by Olyan when he takes the euphemism "lyings-of-a-woman" מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה and compares this to a similar phrase, "the-lying-down-of-a-male" מִשְׁכַּב זָכָר, found in Numbers 31:17-18, and 35, and Judges 21:11-12 (2.3.3.2.2). Consequently, Olyan (1994:184) concludes that the lying down of the male is a restricted idiom for "vaginal receptivity". In his comparison with Leviticus 18:22 ("lyings-of-a-woman"), he reasons that this is referencing anal receptivity, which ultimately assigns guilt only to the active party.

Olyan's view is thoroughly critiqued by Hess (2008: 743-744), who explicates the above differences in terminology between the proof texts Olyan uses to promote his view of Leviticus 18:22: a view which is predicated on speculation and the *non sequitur* conclusion that the "lyings-of-a-woman" is the correlate of anal receptivity. It does not necessarily follow that Leviticus 18:22 corresponds to the cross-references Olyan uses. The expressions and context are not the same.

Moreover, Olyan's claim regarding the 2nd person singular pronoun "you" in 18:22, versus an alleged redacted form in 20:13, which he claims became a 3rd person plural "they", is another example of Olyan's *non sequitur* logic. Kiuchi's (2007: 329) insights on Leviticus 18 apply to Olyan's contention: "Since vv. 3-5 and vv. 24-30 are addressed in the 2nd person pl., while vv. 6-23 are 2nd person sg., the Israelites as a whole as well as each individual are the addressees of the Lord's commandments. Most of these prohibitions are mentioned again in ch. 20 in combination with their associated punishment." The context of Leviticus 18:6-23 is simply addressing the individual heads of households in a polemical environment, while the context of Leviticus 20 is embedded in a punishment setting. This argues against Olyan's theory related to his artificial distinction between the 2nd person singular in 18:22, which he says addresses the alleged active partner. This is in contrast to his highly speculative redacted 3rd person plural in

chapter 20. The truth is that 18:6-23 is consistently addressing the heads of the various households in the 2nd person singular. The pronoun in 18:22 is not addressing Olyan's penetrator, but the head of each home as a warning.

As part of his complex reasoning, Olyan maintains it was only when 20:13 was redacted that both parties shared culpability, probably because of the mixing of semen with excrement. This mixture, it is assumed, involved the combination of two defiling substances. But Gagnon (2001:134-135) responds to this claim, noting that in Leviticus 18:19-23, it is only sex with a menstruating wife that places any ban on the mixing of two antithetical secretions. If Olyan is right, why then is there no corresponding injunction placed on heterosexual anal intercourse? Olyan misses the whole point; the issue is not about the defiling mixture of bodily substances, but about maintaining gender distinction between a man and a woman (Gagnon, 2001:135).

7.3.2.3 Stiebert and Walsh's passive partner construct

Like Olyan above, Siebert and Walsh use another version of "lyings of a woman" (Lv 18:22) which places the onus of guilt on the passive partner (2.3.3.2.3). Walsh (2001:205) believes that this clause is a "cognate direct object construction". This construction would equate the noun with the same verbal idea as the verb. Such an emphasis finds the locus of guilt in the passive partner for allowing himself to be feminized in an honour-shame culture that frowns on such.

The grammatical-historical answer to this follows much the same line as in the previous pro-gay assessments above. Here are five counter claims that challenge this passive partner construct:

1. Stiebert and Walsh support their contention by depending heavily on the honour-shame motif to augment their argument. This was sufficiently addressed above (7.2.3.2).

2. Stiebert and Walsh focus on the role of the woman rather than concentrating on the action which is the real emphasis. Throughout the Leviticus 18 context, the stress is on the action, not the role. In close association with Leviticus 18:22, 18:23 highlights the action in bestiality, not the role of either the violator or the violated (Dickson, 2002:361).

3. Dickson (2002:361) draws attention to the implied simile found in Leviticus 18:22 "as with a woman". This equates to active penetrative intercourse. Again, the weight of the textual evidence is placed on the activity, not the role.

4. Stiebert and Walsh make a further appeal to Numbers 31:17 and Judges 21:11. In these two passages *yāda*ʿ "know" precedes מִשְׁכָּב זָכָר. They contend that the presence of "known" (יָדַע)

speaks to the woman's experience, which they liken to her role. Dickson explains the particular structure of those two texts as indicating that knowing a man is to know his bed. In other words, it means that by knowing the man, the woman is bedded to him. This gives her the status of being his wife. So, the proof-texts used by Stiebert and Walsh actually reference the kind of intercourse that gives the woman the status of being a wife. The construction in Leviticus 18:22 is demonstrably not the same.

5. The evaluation of Stiebert and Walsh finds its greatest strength in the word order of both Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (3.2.4.2). The unique word sequence of these two verses in the Hebrew is very revealing about where the stress is placed. The word sequence is direct object + verb + subject + indirect object. The direct object is fronted for the sake of emphasis, with the indirect object qualifying the antecedent clause. This is illustrated by recalling Wold's translation based on this particular construction: "The male you must not lie with as with a female" (Wold, 1998:102). It is equally significant that Leviticus 20:13 shares the same syntax.

   Combined, these five evaluative observations locate the focus of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 on the sexual activity of that which pertains to a woman. It is clearly the sexual act being highlighted, not the sexual role of the woman. So, Stiebert and Walsh wrongly conclude that Leviticus 18:22 restricts the application of this passage to a free Jewish citizen who takes the passive role.

7.3.2.4 Milgrom's procreative abstraction view

The final pro-gay grammatical viewpoint of note is that of Milgrom (2.3.3.2.4). He understands the Levitical prohibition to be a procreative offense. Milgrom supports this thesis by saying that seminal emissions in illicit intercourse effect procreative aberrations. He further limits the proscription in 18:22 to the geographical confines of Israel itself. So, any Jew or Gentile who contravenes the commandment is guilty. But outside of Israel's borders, the ban loses its force. This is yet another variation of the pro-gay theme of curbing the force of the Levitical prohibitions. In reply, a five-fold response questions Milgrom's unique proposal:

1. White and Niell (2002:64-69) call this "a case of geographical morality". The question to ask here is this: If homosexuality was restricted only to those Jews and non-Jews living in the land of Israel, then why did God judge the surrounding nations for the same sexual violations (Lv 18:3, 24-30) (Gane, 2004:326)? Furthermore, how does this explain the 40-year wilderness wanderings before Israel ever crossed the Jordan into what became Israel? That the sexual laws were immediately in force is evident from Numbers 22-25, when

certain of the Jews partook in the orgiastic fertility rites of the Moabites and were severely punished for it.

2. If Milgrom's interpretation is carried to its logical conclusion, it would exempt all diaspora Jews and Gentiles alike from the commands regarding incest, adultery, child sacrifice, and bestiality (Gagnon, 2001:116 n. 185). But the context of Leviticus 18 and 20 indicates no such exemption.

3. Much of what is said in Chapters 3 to 6 of this dissertation reveals that the Leviticus 18:22 command is universal in its scope and extent, not severely conditioned as Milgrom thinks.

4. The immediate environment of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 is within the legal format that also includes incest, adultery, and bestiality. If these are moral laws that are trans-temporal and transcultural, then why would moral laws concerning homosexuality be any different? There is no obvious rationale to conclude that the divine injunction against homosexuality is any different from that of the other sexual proscriptions.

5. In relation to Milgrom's procreative theme, he sees illicit seminal emissions as part of the problem. Wold (1998:115-116) notes that biblical religion rejected the notion that bodily fluids had any magical effects. In the end, homosexuality is wrong not because of misappropriated seminal fluids, but because it is contrary to God's created order.

There is no denying the creativity of Milgrom's thesis, or any of the other pro-gay interpretations for that matter. All those assessed share one common interpretative trait, viz. that they all strive to limit the homosexual prohibition in one way, shape, form or another. In this, their parameters are too narrowly defined, as they prematurely read present-day concerns into their hermeneutical process. And, like the other pro-gay advocates assessed, Milgrom forces certain elements of the text while ignoring other details that would call his whole theory into question.

7.4 Assessing the pro-gay treatment of *analogia fidei*

Up to this point, this critique of pro-gay interpretational matters from Chapter 2 has concentrated on the fulcrum of this dissertation — Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. But how does this compare to pro-gay interpretations in other related Old Testament passages? Since Chapter 3 (3.2.5) expounded on the essential aspects of comparing Scripture with Scripture in the related passages on homosexuality, the reader is urged to compare 2.3.4 with 3.2.5 to evaluate the differences.

This much can be said: the pro-gay use of analogy of the faith displays the same sceptical attitudes of hermeneutical suspicion evidenced throughout their treatment Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. The same revisionist tendencies are revealed to one degree or another, depending on the pro-gay interpreter. They read the corresponding texts through the same lens of current homosexual concern. They attempt to dehistoricize the creation account (2.3.4.1), before deconstructing the Sodom and Gomorrah incident into something on the level of an Ancient Near Eastern hospitality breach (2.3.4.2). The same pro-gay strategy is applied to Judges 19-20, where they decouple Genesis 19:1-11 from the Judges equivalent and interpret it through the honour-shame model already discussed. The pro-gay encounter with cultic prostitution (Dt 23:17-18) discounts the injunction as a mere rhetorical device meant to ridicule Israel's enemies. It amounts to nothing more than a scribal amendment for the sake of effect (2.3.4.3).

It was concluded at the end of 2.3.4.3 that one pro-gay constant is their hermeneutical consistency. And while their methods and approaches all vary, the end is predictable, as they always endeavour to somehow limit the divine embargo on same-sex acts.

7.5 Assessing pro-gay interpreter's use of application

In Chapter 6, the critical importance of applying the meaning of the text was defined and explained, the methodology outlined, and examples were suggested. How does this differ from the pro-gay use of application? At the conclusion of Chapter 2, some of the applicational outcomes of the pro-gay hermeneutic were presented (2.3.5). When compared to 6.5, the pro-gay conclusions are shown to be diametrically opposed to the grammatical-historical conclusions. In light of the pro-gay applications (2.3.5), the following grammatical-historical critique is offered:

7.5.1 Assessing the pro-gay anachronistic dismissal of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

The overall pro-gay conclusion regarding the Levitical same-sex prohibitions (Lv 18:22; 20:13) occasions the isolation of the historical and cultural situation locked in an unrelated time warp far removed from current realities (2.3.5.1). Hence, these proscriptions are to be disregarded today. Because pro-gay scholars believe that the injunctions are historically and culturally conditioned, there is no correlation to the present situation — either explicitly or implicitly. After all, the ancients did not know what moderns know on the subject. If the ancients had known what is known presently about "sexual orientation", perhaps pre-modern Hebrews would have had a more tolerant attitude towards loving and consensual same-sex relationships as they are known today.

In response to this, two grammatical-historical claims question the pro-gay conclusion:

7.5.1.1 Pro-gay interpreters ignore and dismiss history

As discussed in Chapter 5, there is ample evidence from the Graeco-Roman era that refutes the pro-gay contention that the ancients did not understand sexual orientation. But based on the research of Hubbard, Loader, Brooten,[14] and Caragounis, it is certain that the ancients of that epoch had some sense of what is now referred to as "sexual orientation" (5.3.1.1). This may have been communicated in different forms from those known today, but the general essence of the idea was present in antiquity. From this, it can be concluded that these ancients recognized the modern idea of the loving consensual same-sex couple. They may have used distinct forms, but with a similar essence that corresponds to current concepts.

The failure of most pro-gay interpreters to acknowledge this piece of history reflects a present-day sense of superiority that views the ancients as uneducated and unenlightened. Although it is true that modern society is more advanced scientifically and technologically, it is not certain that current society is any better morally, socially, domestically, or spiritually. More technological knowledge does not necessarily equate to moral superiority.

7.5.1.2 Pro-gay interpreters ignore and dismiss the distinction between ritual purity and moral purity

Pro-gay proponents are united in their agreement regarding their perception of the cultic-purity environment they say attends the Levitical same-sex ban. They uniformly limit the Levitical text by erecting a moral barrier between then and now. They see in ancient Israel a ritually-based culture that has no moral meaning for today.

In his seminal work, Klawans (2000:1-28; 2003:89-102), established a clear pattern and distinction between ancient ritual purity and moral purity. To make dietary laws (Lv 11) parallel to laws preventing sexual distortion is a faulty correspondence. Klawans (2000:26-27)[15] cites five key differences between ritual and moral defilement:

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[14] Both Brooten and Loader are known pro-gay interpreters (5.3.1.1), who nevertheless articulate the reality of the ancient record related to this point. They both record this historical fact and acknowledge that the Bible inclusively prohibits all forms of homosexuality. But in the end, they believe that love conquers all.

[15] Also see Klawans (2003:89-102) for an extended discussion on the purity motif. Also see the cursory comments by Gane (2012:165-166).

1. Ritual defilement is generally not sinful, whereas moral defilement is always a direct consequence of grave sin.[16]
2. Ritual defilement results in contagious defilement, whereas moral defilement is not associated with being a contact contagion.
3. Ritual defilement results in temporal defilement, whereas moral defilement was long-lasting, if not permanent, and led to defilement of both the sinner and the land.
4. Ritual defilement, because it was impermanent, could be purified through purification rites; whereas moral purity was accomplished by punishment, atonement, or by refraining from committing the act in the first place.
5. Klawans further explains the terminological distinction between ritual and moral defilement: "Although the term impure [*ṭmʾ*] is used in both contexts, the terms 'abomination' [*twʿbh*] and 'pollute' [*ḥnp*] are used with regard to the sources of moral impurity, but not with regard to the sources of ritual impurity" (2000:26-27).[17]

It is not uncommon for pro-gay interpreters to compare homosexuality to wearing a garment composed of different fabrics, or eating shellfish. Based on Klawans's argument referred to above, Gagnon (2012:64) points out this pro-gay attempted correlation of homosexuality with ritual impurity is a false analogue. Gagnon's rationale is here summarized: (1) there is no correspondence between the severity of the offense as indicated by the punishment — presumably the offending garment was burned, while homosexuality merited death, the *kareth* penalty for the nation, and potential expulsion from the land; (2) there is no correspondence in the absoluteness of the command; (3) there is no comparison in respect of comprehensive biblical witness against homosexuality (see Chapters 3 to 6 of this dissertation); and (4) there is no comparison regarding the social-scientific example today, negating prohibitions preventing fabric mixtures and having intercourse with a menstruant. The prohibition for homosexuality is on a completely different level.

In most instances there is a clear and distinguishable difference between ritual purity and moral purity. In another article, Gagnon concludes, "Those who contend that the broadly worded proscription against same-sex intercourse should be confined to cultic prostitution do not contend that the narrowly worded proscription of child sacrifice to Molech had no implications to other forms of child sacrifice" (Dalrymple, 2013:3).

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[16] See DeYoung (2000:55), Kiuchi (2007:340), Mathews (2009:161), Peterson (2004:9), Willis (2009:174), and White and Niell (2002:89), who all underscore the seriousness of the penalty as a strong indicator of the gravity of homosexuality. Kaiser points out that, unlike the purity violations of Leviticus 11-15, there is nothing in the prohibition of homosexuality that anticipates Christ (1991:118).

[17] In an earlier article, Klawans (1997:15) remarks that Jesus prioritizes moral purity over ritual purity with Jesus nowhere defending ritual purity as a symbol of moral purity.

The singular purpose of Leviticus 18:6-23 is to restore original created order within the parameters of human depravity (Kiuchi, 2007:331), not bifurcate sexual violations according to those that are purity violations and those which were moral transgressions.[18]

7.5.2 Assessing the pro-gay argument from silence affirming lesbianism

The pro-gay advocates are fond of mentioning the textual silence regarding lesbianism[19] in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (2.3.5.2). This is seen as tacit approval for woman-woman homosexuality. But is it? The grammatical-historical answer offers these six pro-gay oversights:

1. The lack of a direct Old Testament prohibition does not render a particular behaviour morally acceptable. If this were the case, then white-collar crime and paedophilia would be permissible (White & Niell, 2002:105-106).

2. The Ten Commandments were all addressed in the masculine singular, as are the sexual proscriptions in Leviticus 18:6-23. Yet the Decalogue was inclusively intended for both genders of all ages (Bailey, 2005:246; Davidson, 2007:150; Klawans, 2000:40; Mathews, 2009:157).[20]

3. The Mosaic law, as previously discussed (4.2.4), was not meant to be an exhaustive compendium of laws. Therefore, this list of sexual prohibitions is meant to be foundational and representative, not inclusive of all possible relational combinations and potential distortions (Kaiser, 1994:1124; Mathews, 2009:157). Based on Burnside's (2006:406) taxonomy for binary oppositional structures, the transgressing act should be juxtaposed with the moral norm. Then it is to be evaluated in relation to its rank in other forms of deviancy.[21]

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[18] Ukleja (1983:263) explains that ritual purity and moral purity are not exclusive of each other, but that in some instances they are closely related to one another.

[19] Greek scholar and classicist Caragounis (2007:31) declares that lesbianism, although it occurred, was not all that common in the Graeco-Roman period.

[20] Klawans (2000:40) supports this conclusion: "Though the sexual laws are addressed to men, on the whole they apply equally to men and women. Being that these are sexual laws, the prohibitions ultimately shape the behavior of both men and women … With regard to the sex laws, both women and men who wittingly commit sexual transgressions are sentenced to death. This is so because in Leviticus 18 and 20, sexual transgression is not primarily a crime of property committed against a husband or father, but an abomination — a crime against God. It is precisely this aspect of the sexual laws that is of interest to us. Like idolatry and murder — crimes that do not discriminate when it comes to gender — the sexual laws have the power to defile the land and bring about the exile to its inhabitants. Men and women, equally, can perpetrate these crimes."

[21] Kaiser (1994:1124, 1126) illustrates this by pointing out that there is no specific incest prohibition between a father and daughter, but this would be implied from the prohibition between a grandfather and his granddaughter (Lv 18:10). There is no command against sexual acts between an uncle and his niece, but this is inferred on the basis of the forbidden union between an aunt and her nephew (Lv 18:14).

4. The scope of the entire biblical witness, including Romans 1:26, delivers a univocal denunciation of lesbian unions — both implicit and explicit. The Levitical testimony to this is indirect, but it is confirmed by creation order (Davidson, 2007:149-150; Hess, 2008:742).

5. The pro-gay assessment assumes that the lack of penetration characteristic in lesbian unions signals approval. Does this make any sexual act acceptable so long as there is no penetration involved? (Gagnon, 2001:142-146).

6. The balance of the pro-gay argument is entirely reliant on an argument from silence. This is a very tenuous way to substantiate the claim, especially when it serves as the primary argument.

So, in answer to the query regarding the permissibility of lesbianism in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the biblical data is unambiguous in its negative assessment of female-female unions.

7.5.3 Assessing the pro-gay promotion of social justice

One of the liberating goals of pro-gay interpreters is to promote sexual social justice and equality. Without question, justice is a laudable pursuit for Christians. But the question here is, which version of justice should be sought — God's, or the anthropocentric form of justice? Pro-gay proponents seek a more humanistic version of justice, one that has more in common with neo-Marxist theory than the Bible (2.3.5.3).[22] This is in keeping with their alliance with elements of Liberation Theology and its hermeneutic circle. One of the goals of this brand of justice is to coercively promote sexual and marital "equality".

This whole concept is problematic because it attempts to humanistically redefine gender, marriage, and sexuality which are essential components of creation order. This dogma of justice promotes victimology while failing to address personal and individual sin. In this scheme, sin, man, and salvation are all redefined and structurally reformulated, confusing these doctrines with the Marxist dialectic. In contradistinction, in Paul's exposition on human sexual behaviour (1 Th 4:3-7), he predicates this on God's holiness and God's will. Sexual sin is not a matter of justice, love, tolerance, personal desires, or equality. It is, however, a subject of God's holy will.

7.5.4 Assessing the pro-gay abandonment of moral absolutes

The relativistic proclivities of pro-gay interpreters have been mentioned already in various places in this dissertation (especially 2.3.5.4). It is this void of absolutes that is directly

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[22] See E. Calvin Beisner's (2013:1-29) helpful article on social justice, *Social justice: How good intentions undermine justice and gospel*.

responsible for their revisionist interpretations. This philosophy believes that truth is dynamic and ever-changing. Therefore, ethics are always evolving, because there is no transcendent source for morality. To be sure, pro-gay interpreters have exchanged the law of transcendence for the law of correspondence, which occasions a mutational sexual ethic.[23] This mutating ethic responds to changing social, political, and religious conditions (Gagnon, 2005:378). Consequently, certitude is elusive and unattainable.

This abandonment of moral absolutes presents a doctrinal hazard with a mutating morality, altering the nature and character of God (Ukleja, 1983:265). Moral absolutes find their basis fixed in the immutability of God (Ml 3:6; Js 1:17). From this flows the necessary corollary for the required authority for teaching on godly family relationships sourced in a transcendent God (Mathews, 2009:157). Apart from a fixed external standard, familial disorder and confusion result. Absent these ethical givens, society sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind.[24]

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[23] Morality is organized around the Law of Transcendence, which is rooted in the idea that "God is radically discontinuous with the world" (Oswalt, 1979:32-33; 2009:81-82). He is, therefore, wholly other than that which is created. Thus, there are God-ordained boundaries which, if transgressed, have physical and spiritual implications. The Law of Correspondence assumes that all things are alike and finds fertile soil in the philosophy of pantheism or its first cousin, panentheism. So, based on the idea that affective bonds between two people of the same sex are somehow like those of the one-man one-woman requirement established in the creation account, pro-gay interpreters promote same-sex unions. Oswalt(1979:29; 2009:43-44, 47-54) also includes the Law of Continuity in this discussion, which he explains further on page 29 and at greater length in his 2009 book.

[24] Schaeffer (1982:37) gives a devastating critique of this mind-set in his classic work *The God who is there*: "Some forms of homosexuality today are of a similar nature, in that they are not just homosexuality but a philosophic expression. One must have understanding for the real homophile's problem. But much modern homosexuality is an expression of the current denial of antithesis. It has led in this case to an obliteration of the distinction between man and woman. So the male and the female as complementary partners are finished. This is a form of homosexuality which is a part of the movement below the line of despair. In much of modern thinking, all antithesis and all the order of God's creation is to be fought against — including the male-female distinctions. The pressure toward unisex is largely rooted here. But this is not an isolated problem; it is a part of the world-spirit of the generation which surrounds us. It is imperative that Christians realize the conclusions which are being drawn as a result of the death of absolutes." In a later work, Schaeffer (1984:136-137) warns of the dangerous outcomes of denying absolutes and blurring creational distinctions: "I have dwelt at length on this because it is an absolutely crucial point. To deny the truth of what it means to be male and female as taught in the Scriptures is to deny something essential about the nature of man and about the character of God and his relationship to man. But this denial has equally tragic consequences for society and human life. If we accept the idea of equality without distinction, we logically must accept the ideas of abortion and homosexuality. For if there are no significant distinctions between men and women, then certainly we cannot condemn homosexual relationships … Again we see that an idea which sounds at first so close to a genuinely biblical idea ends up in a completely different place. The idea of absolute, autonomous freedom from God's boundaries flows into the idea of equality without distinction, which flows into the denial of what it truly means to be male and female, which flows into abortion and homosexuality, and the destruction of the home and the family, and ultimately to the destruction of our culture … There are many who accept the idea of equality without distinction and deliberately set aside what the Scriptures teach at this point. And there are others who call themselves evangelical and then affirm the acceptability of homosexuality and even the idea of homosexual 'marriage.'"

7.5.5 Assessing pro-gay reliance on human reason and personal experience

In direct relation to the previous evaluation (7.5.4), pro-gay advocates elevate human reason and personal human experience above the commands prohibiting homosexuality (2.3.5.5). These two presuppositions form a significant prong in the pro-gay toolkit. But this is not to deny a proper role for reason and experience in the hierarchy of divine priorities when they are subject to God's word. But the pro-gay praxis of change requires a constant reformulation of moral boundaries.

The situation at hand uses modern sexology to correct the Bible. Once human rebellion becomes the canon, it inevitably leads to fundamental redefinitions (DeYoung, 2000:16). The question that requires a satisfactory answer from pro-gay interpreters is whether or not they hold to a sexual theology or a theology of sex? A simple reading of much of the pro-gay material on the subject discloses a commitment to a sexual theology.[25] The terminus of this promotes sexuality as absolute while theology is now an abstraction.

The concern here is that fallen human reason liberated from divine revelation invariably surrenders to personal experience and the subjective. This is ethically precarious. To make sexually moral decisions built on unreliable experiences is logically fallacious. The order here is Scripture, with reason and experience submitted below — in this sequence.

Grounding the advocacy of homosexuality on personal stories and experiences makes for a poor yardstick for the church. It exalts sexual experience and subjectivized reason over the Scriptures and 2 000 years of biblical tradition (Taylor, 1995:7). Burk (2010:218) rightly observes, "If one appeals to someone else's experience, then we need to examine the

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[25] There are many examples of pro-gay interpreters who evidence a sexual theology that views the entirety of Scripture through the lens of the modern sexual revolution. In *Same-sex marriage? A Christian analysis*, Ellison calls for a new sexual ethic in a section entitled "The call for ethical eroticism". Ellison promotes different varieties of marriage to include polyamory (group marriage). For a book that purports to be a "Christian analysis" of sexual ethics, it is curious that Ellison never bothers to quote Scripture. *The Queer Bible commentary* (2006) seeks to homosexualize every book of the Bible, limiting its biblical commentary controlled solely by sexual concerns. In *Queer commentary and the Bible* (2001), edited by Ken Stone, there are chapters like "Cruising as methodology: Homoeroticism and the Scriptures". Another chapter is entitled, "Violent femmes and s/m: Queering Samson and Delilah". Another supposedly hermeneutically based book, *Take back the Word: A queer reading of the Bible* (2000), reveals chapters like "Nehemiah as a queer model for servant leadership" and "Coming out, Lazarus's and ours: Queer reflections of a psychospiritual political journey". For his part, Countryman, in *Dirt, greed, & sex* (1990), promotes the bulk of the sexual revolution in his final chapter "New Testament ethics and today's world". Here, he promotes everything from pre-marital sex to bestiality, as long as no one gets hurt. About the only thing he proscribes is adultery, but given his penchant for revisionism, he is hard pressed to marshal a convincing argument for maintaining the prohibition. Burk (2010:215-216) recounts his attendance at the LGBT/Queer hermeneutics section and at an annual *Society of Biblical Literature* conference. Burk (2010:216) recalls his reaction to the papers he heard as "both startling and sobering". Then there is *The Queen James Bible* (2012), with its revised translations of homosexual passages, lending further support to the contention at hand. It all illustrates that there are many pro-gay interpreters who are driven by a sexual theology rather than a theology of sex. One can only imagine what they do with John 3:16. Of course, there are pro-gay interpreters who do not press their arguments as far as these. But their relativistic tendencies make it difficult for them protest to the contrary.

experience of ex-gays". But the ex-gay experience is an experience pro-gay interpreters would rather not consider.

7.5.6 Assessing the pro-gay love-conquers-all sexual ethic

The pro-gay promotion of a love ethic cannot remain unevaluated (2.3.5.6). In Chapter 2 (2.3.5.6), it was stated that pro-gay interpreters use what could be called a "hermeneutic of love" (Grenz, 1998:91-93). Some pro-gay interpreters go so far as to make love the sole ethic for the church and individual Christian. It is not denied that love is an extremely commendable virtue, one for which every Christian should always strive. Yet, as with every term and concept, love must be defined, not sentimentally assumed. The recent US Supreme Court decision rendered for same-sex marriage saw many in the various social media repeating the mantra "Love Wins". None of them, however, ever bothered to define just what love is.

Accordingly, what do grammatical-historical exegetes need to consider as they evaluate the all-you-need-is-love ethic?

1. The consideration of the character and nature of God is absolutely essential in understanding love and its implications. It is true that God is love (1 Jn 4:8-9). But is this all that God is? Love is not the sum of God's attributes. Otherwise, He would be reduced to an impersonal love force, i.e., love is God. The triune Godhead is a complex of infinite attributes that "cannot be separated from the essence ontologically, only theoretically" (McCune, 2008:204). God's attributes cannot be divided and abstracted from his other attributes. McCune (2008:205) explains it this way: "This also means that God's love is eternal and holy and that His eternity is that of a loving and wise being." This means that God's love never travels alone. Whatever else God's love is, it is defined by his entire complex of attributes which includes justice, righteousness, truth, and holiness. For this reason, true love is innately moral with ethical implications. It never eclipses the universal moral mandates of a holy God.

2. Love must be defined properly and biblically. Sinful humanity is notorious for distorting and redefining love in subjective, self-serving categories. Grenz (1998:93) describes self-centred love as "'love' in a self-regarding relativistic individualism". The Christian definition of love should take its cue from the love Christ demonstrated through his supreme substitutionary sacrifice on the cross (Jn 15:13), not romantic sentimentalism. It is this unselfish, self-emptying, self-denying love of Christ that Paul referred to in 2 Corinthians 5:14, saying, "The love of Christ constrains me", which is a reference to the objective love displayed by Christ on the cross. It was this love that motivated Paul's view of love.

3. The contention that love is the sole norm for sexual relations must be evaluated in light of other pro-gay claims. If this is true, then “we must look to love — and not sexual orientation — to determine the morality of such a relation” (Grenz, 1998:93). In the pro-gay equation, sexual orientation is subordinated to love. By this standard almost any relationship is acceptable as long as it is “loving”.

4. Love is attended with responsibility. The reality of love does not release one from the ethical norms found in the Bible, like the one found in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Prior to Leviticus 19:18, verse 17 is a command to “reprove” one’s neighbour. This is in the direct context of what it means to love one’s neighbour. However else loving one’s neighbour might be applied, it is not possible to genuinely love a neighbour while affirming them in their sin (1 Cor 13:6). Failure here makes one a tacit partaker in one’s neighbour’s sin. Furthermore, loving one’s neighbour assumes a prior commitment to loving God wholeheartedly (Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27) It can be concluded that it is not possible to biblically love one’s neighbour as one should unless such love finds its source in a comprehensive love for God.

5. There is a danger in exaggerated love. Because love has been exploited and hijacked by hedonism, sectors of the church have affirmed homosexuality based on “love” (Rooker, 2000:247). This version of exaggerated love finds its end in a free-range morality that enjoys transient boundaries.

In the final analysis, if love-conquers-all is the sole catalyst for sexual ethics; this presents a real moral dilemma for pro-gay proponents. If a subjectively derived view of love is the matrix for morality, then almost any sexual act is legitimate so long as it is deemed “loving”. This is well illustrated by Dallas (1996:174): “The love between two homosexuals cannot make homosexuality normal or legitimate, any more than the love of two people committing adultery justifies the breaking of marital vows.”

As this chapter indicates, there are many pro-gay critical assumptions that unduly influence their hermeneutic. These assumptions ultimately override the text of Scripture and replace authorial intent with the interpreter’s subjectively derived meaning. They exclude the possibility of the Bible “critically evaluating the veracity of the assumption” (Haas, 1995:334). In this equation, the preconceived ideals of the pro-gay interpreter become the final authority.

Upon examining and evaluating the pro-gay hermeneutic in light of the grammatical-historical methodology applied to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, the contrast between these two methods is stark. Both positions begin with contrary presuppositions and rival authorities. Both positions approach the exegesis of these two texts from opposite ends of the spectrum. It is, therefore,

understandable why the conclusions drawn by both pro-gay and grammatical-historical scholars are incompatible. It does make one wonder what would happen if pro-gay interpreters abandoned their relativistic and revisionist methods for the grammatical-historical hermeneutic? In very candid fashion, pro-gay interpreter, Luke Timothy Johnson (2007), forthrightly answers this very question: “I have little patience with efforts to make Scripture say something other than what it says, through appeals to linguistic or cultural subtleties. The exegetical situation is straightforward: we know what the text says. But what are we to do with what the text says? … I think it important to state clearly that we do, in fact, reject the straightforward commands of Scripture, and appeal instead to another authority when we declare that same-sex unions can be holy and good. And what exactly is that authority? We appeal explicitly to the weight of our own experience and the experience thousands of others have witnessed to, which tells us that to claim our own sexual orientation is in fact to accept the way in which God has created us. By so doing, we explicitly reject as well the premises of the scriptural statements condemning homosexuality — namely, that it is a vice freely chosen, a symptom of human corruption, and disobedience to God’s created order.”

8. CONCLUSION

As this writer completed Chapter 7, it was announced in the South African media that the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa had approved same-sex unions and removed its “celibate clause” from a previous ruling. This allows for the ordination of practising homosexual ministers (Ngubane, 2015). For many faithful Dutch Reformed Church members this may have come as quite a surprise, but for those who have followed the issue of homosexuality in recent years this was predictable. What should be noted is that this decision did not just happen. It was years in the making, following a somewhat predictable bibliological and hermeneutical pathology (2.1) that incrementally led to the recent ruling.

So what led to the recent Dutch Reformed Church decision permitting same-sex unions and practising homosexual ministers? The answer to this, in large measure, is explained in the development of this dissertation. The baseline beliefs that affirm full-blown homosexuality and same-sex unions in the church are really the subject of the discussion that began in Chapter 1 and progressed to Chapter 7, with its evaluation of the pro-gay hermeneutic which was surveyed in Chapter 2. Those seeking an explanation regarding the Dutch Reformed Church’s about-face related to homosexuality need look no further than Chapter 2 of this dissertation for the template on how this decision was made. It was a gradual process that culminated in the October 2015 ruling. It was a decision that was conceived when some leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church “evolved” in their understanding of biblical inerrancy and authority (2.2.1). Once biblical authority was diminished, and/or entirely abandoned, it was soon replaced with other competing authorities (2.2.2-2.2.5). This included a heavy reliance on historical criticism, liberation hermeneutics, the adaptation of postmodern hermeneutics — i.e., reader-response methods — and the elevation of social-scientific criticism over the Bible itself.

Built upon these basal assumptions, denominations, like the Dutch Reformed Church, approach the text of Scripture in a whole new way producing predetermined interpretations that coincide with their presuppositional premise. As a result, pro-gay interpreters approach the context of passages, like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, in a novel way. In relation to this, their lexical/grammatical insights (2.3.3) unnaturally restrict the context of the meaning of key words, like “abomination” (תּוֹעֵבָה) (Lv 18:22; 20:13). The end result is truncated word meanings shorn of adequate context. They confine the divine assessment “abomination” of male-male intercourse to a cultic connotation identified with pagan idolatry practices or something on the level of a ritual purity violation (Lv 11-15). Such a definition constricts the Levitical prohibition to nothing more than a culturally derived ancient boundary marker restricted to the ancient past. When combined with associated pro-gay grammatical assessments of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, it all coalesces into a truncated meaning of the text which is time-bound and culture-

bound. Thus, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are said to have no ethical import for Christians today. The chasm between those ancients of Leviticus 18-20 and the 21st-century moderns is thought to be an impassable gap too wide to span either historically or morally.

The constricted interpretation given by pro-gay interpreters then leads to a more relativistic application (2.3.5), an application that is perceived to be a more advanced and enlightened view of homosexuality and same-sex unions. This pro-gay application concludes with a sexual ethic that is reduced to no more than a mere matter of personal opinion motivated by auto-subjectivity (2.3.5.6). This self-styled sexual ethic individually decides on the rightness or wrongness of a sexual act based on mutual consent and an undefined "love". This allows pro-gay interpreters to promote a more amoral sexual ethic grounded in self, not Scripture. This is illustrated by three pro-gay scholars who advocate the following amended sexual ethic in their respective homosexual-affirming books:

- "The crux of the matter, it seems to me, is simply that the Bible has no sexual ethic. Instead, it exhibits a variety of sexual mores, some of which changed over the thousand-year span of biblical history … The Bible knows only the love ethic, which is constantly being brought to bear on whatever sexual mores are dominant in any given country, or culture, or period" (Wink, 1994:44).
- "To be specific, the gospel allows no rule against the following, in and of themselves: masturbation, nonvaginal heterosexual intercourse, bestiality, polygamy, homosexual acts, or erotic art and literature. The Christian is free to be repelled by any of these and may continue to practice her or his own purity code in relation to them. What we are not free to do is impose our codes on others …Bestiality, where it is casual recourse of the young or of people isolated over long periods of time from other humans, should occasion little concern" (Countryman, 1990:243-244).
- "… How exactly does the number of partners affect the moral quality of a relationship? This question requires a serious answer. Could it be that limiting intimate partnerships to only two people at a time is no guarantee of avoiding exploitation, and expanding them to include more than two parties is no guarantee that a relationship will be exploitative?" (Ellison, 2004:155).

The preceding quotes demonstrate the arbitrary and dynamic nature of the pro-gay conclusion, a conclusion that discards ethical absolutes in favour of moral ambiguity. So, those in churches and denominations that embrace the acceptance of homosexuality and same-sex unions need to know that is not the terminus of the sexual revolution. It is just the thin edge of the wedge where erotic liberties are concerned, with homosexuality serving as the gateway to further

gender confusion and sexual dislocation. This will not leave tradtional marriage and biblical sexual ethics unaffected.

In contrast to this assessment of the pro-gay hermeneutic and its logical end, the grammatical-historical methodology explained in Chapter 3 begins with a completely different set of baseline assumptions that form the cornerstone of the literal hermeneutical methodology. Grammatical-historical interpreters take as their starting point the inerrancy and timeless authority of God's word for present-day Christians (3.1). Unlike the goal of pro-gay interpreters, grammatical-historical interpreters strive for the meaning intended by the original human author. This approach results in a meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 on which all grammatical-historical interpreters can agree — primarily, that all homosexual acts are proscribed in these texts, both explicitly and implicitly, to include lesbianism.

Based on a careful analysis of ancient Israel's culture and background, and that of her surrounding Ancient Near Eastern neighbours (3.2.1 and 3.2.2), the grammatical-historical interpreter sets the table for crucial lexical/grammatical insights to be gleaned from the text (3.2.3). This leads to a broader definition for the term "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה) in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. The literal definition of "abomination" includes definite moral and ethical overtones that resonate all the way to the present day. When combined with the uniquely emphatic syntagmatic constructions found in those texts, it yields a meaning that declares an unequivocal and universal disapproval of all same-sex intercourse, a proscription that entails more than just cultic and purity concerns. The severity of the penalty attached to same-sex intercourse (3.2.4.4) supports the moral significance of the prohibition. Consequently, this grammatical-historical interpretation finds further substantiation when the interpreter considers the *anlogia fidei* (3.2.5). In light of God's original creation order, design, and intent (3.2.5.1), homosexuality blurs gender differentiation, confuses the complementary nature of marriage, nullifies the numerical requirement for two people, distorts sexuality out of its God-ordained context, and renders monogamy unnecessary. The illustrations that follow (Gn 19:1-11; Lv 18:22; 20:13; Dt 22:5; 23:17-18; Jdg 19-20; Ezk 16:50) in the other related passages illustrate the consequences of deviating from God's creation ordinance for homoerotic acts.

Where the issue of homosexuality and the Bible is concerned, the topic of Mosaic law and its pertinence to a New Covenant economy forms a crucial area for debate. In Chapter 4 this was extensively discussed with the conclusion that while the law found culminating fulfilment in Christ, this does not abrogate the revelatory and regulative implications for New Testament Christians. The methodology for making the bridge from the Old Testament law to the New Testament setting was presented (4.8) with the conclusion that both testaments harmoniously

and unrelentingly proscribe all homosexual activity. This includes the attitude as well as the actual behaviour (4.4.1). It can, therefore, be concluded that instead of annulling the law, the New Testament reappropriates and reapplies these laws in a post-Cross, New Covenant context.

With the bridge from the Old to the New Testament firmly in place, Chapter 5 surveyed the New Testament's assessment of homosexuality from the grammatical-historical viewpoint. From Christ (5.1-5.2), to Paul (5.3), and then Jude (5.4). The message is unrelenting: God condemns all sexual acts, including homosexuality, that disfigure his creation ordinance of gender distinction, monogamy, and sexual complementarity. Jesus reaffirmed the creation order, design, and intent. Paul did the same, while implicitly alluding to Leviticus 18 and 20 in Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. In 1 Timothy 1:9-10 Paul draws upon the Decalogue substituting the adultery of the 7th Command with its logical sub-type — homosexuality (4.2.4). Jesus' use of πορνεια in Mark 7:21 (5.2.1) circumscribed all sexually illicit practices that deviate from the creation norm. Paul's reliance on the Septuagint seems to have inspired the neologism (5.3.2) ἀρσενοκοίτης (1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tm 1:10) which has intertextual ties to Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. When he combines this with μαλακός (1 Cor 6:9), it powerfully addresses God's disapproval of both the active and passive forms of homosexuality without limiting these to prostitution, exploitation, or pederastic acts (5.3.2.2).

Grounded in the Bible's unified denunciation of homosexuality, Chapter 6 sought to rightly apply the Scriptures' unambiguous meaning. An applicational model was presented and specific examples given for the church and individual facing the current moral revolution.

Chapter 7 evaluated the pro-gay hermeneutic in light of the grammatical-historical methodology demonstrated in Chapters 3 to 6. Based on that evaluation, these concluding thoughts are offered regarding the pro-gay hermeneutic, homosexuality, and the grammatical-historical assessment of both as found in the Bible:

- The disparity between the pro-gay and grammatical-historical approaches to hermeneutics is first and foremost a matter of bibliology. This directly determines the interpreter's hermeneutical methodology. The pro-gay assumptions regarding biblical authority serve to prejudice their final outcomes viz. affirming homosexuality and same-sex unions. The presuppositional differences between the pro-gay hermeneutic and that of the grammatical-historical practitioner could be likened to the Springbok rugby team running onto the field to face footballers, Bafana Bafana. The rules of rugby are very different from those of football (soccer). The results would reflect two very different

games with contradictory outcomes. The present hermeneutical debate between pro-gay and grammatical-historical practitioners is very similar. Both sides are interpreting the biblical text from two conflicting hermeneutical systems. Predictably then, when *sola Scriptura* is diminished; it finally gives way to *sola cultura,* with eisegesis eclipsing exegesis. The present state of biblical hermeneutics loudly testifies to this.

- The pro-gay hermeneutic is more of an ideology than a methodology. The undue pro-gay dependence on humanistic anthropology, sociology, psychology, and biology is what manipulates the meaning they obtain from this process. It can, therefore, be concluded that the pro-gay assumptions, i.e., ideology, control their methodology. This in turn, promotes eisegetically anachronistic impositions on texts like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

- The pro-gay hermeneutic could be called the affectio-philosophical hermeneutic because of its emphasis on personal experience and subjective desires, mixed with a heavy dose of anthropocentric existential philosophy. This distinctive blend of the subjective and philosophical leads to transvalued meanings and applications as they reinvent hermeneutics and biblical morality. It amounts to a dialectical hermeneutic that seeks to synthesize the present-day culture with biblical ethics, as if these two could be harmonized. In their quest for cultural relevance, pro-gay practitioners consign the meaning of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to the realm of contemporary irrelevance. In so doing, they establish a false moral equivalence between homosexuality, same-sex unions and human sexuality as God originally ordained it in creation.

- The pro-gay interpretation is out of step with 2000 years of biblical interpretation on this issue (Strachan, 2014:59-75). Until the middle of the 20th-century, there was an unbroken chain of unanimous agreement by biblical scholars on what constituted sexual sin. The universal agreement for the last two millennia is that Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 speak to the issue of homosexuality in a New Covenant environment. It is a precarious thing to dismiss this impressive testimony and to imperiously believe that present culture and society are more sophisticated and enlightened than the weight of a long-accepted, 2000-year old consensus on such a straightforward issue.

What can grammatical-historical interpreters learn from the pro-gay hermeneutic?

- The liberal use of pro-gay revisionism should serve to warn grammatical-historical practitioners of the importance of biblical inerrancy and its related authority. There is a necessary relationship between biblical authority and hermeneutical methodology. Literal interpreters ignore this caution to the detriment of their own interpretations.

- The grammatical-historical practitioner should use pro-gay revisionism as an opportunity to refine, not revise, the exegetical process. And while revisionism should be avoided at all costs, humility dictates that those committed to the grammatical-historical process hone and fine-tune their hermeneutical skills and processes to become better exegetes.

- The grammatical-historical practitioner can have confidence that the biblical writers never condoned any other sexual relationships outside of the creation account: male and female in a monogamous, gender-distinct, covenant-committed relationship. All other sexual departures are contrary to God's original blueprint as instituted at creation. Human sexuality as God originally intended is transhistorical and transcultural in the schema of God's progressive revelation and is not conditioned by cultural or social factors of any kind.

- Even though there are only seven biblical passages that explicitly address homosexuality negatively, this should not be misconstrued as a statement about homosexuality's relative unimportance. Rather, these seven passages should be evaluated in the much larger biblical framework that reaffirms the creation ordinance. The biblical writers of these passages would no sooner support homosexuality today than they would condone adultery, incest, fornication, or bestiality.

- The grammatical-historical practioner would do well to remember that the liberation hermeneutic that sanctions the ordination of women is the same liberation hermeneutic that promotes homosexuality and same-sex unions in the church. Although there are exceptions to this, Grudem (2006:237) rightly cautions evangelicals that "it would be foolish to ignore the trend set by a number of more liberal Protestant denominations, denominations that ... approved the ordination of women using the same arguments that evangelical egalatarians are using today ... those few prominent evangelicals who have endorsed homosexual conduct have already set a pattern of following feminist arguments."

- The grammatical-historical interpreter must remember that homosexuality is one sin among many. It is, however, the one sin that the world presently champions, transvalues, and normalizes. On this basis, the literal interpreter should approach it with an equal measure of truth and grace as he or she simultaneously seeks to defend God's holy will on sexuality and marriage while graciously pursuing those caught in the snare of homosexual vice.

- Above and beyond that already stated, the literal interpreter should remember that rightly dividing God's word is a spiritual enterprise demanding a spiritual mind-set and the aid of the divine author, the Holy Spirit, to interpret Scripture and rightly apply it. For this reason, the hermeneutical procedure is as much of a spiritual pursuit as it is an academic exercise. Therefore, the interpreter should prepare spiritually before ever approaching the Scriptures. In the end, God will ultimately use the foolish things to confound the wise of this world!

It is finally concluded that severed from the grammatical-historical hermeneutic, the singular-sense meaning of the Bible regarding homosexuality and same-sex unions is eclipsed with the interpreter setting sail on a sea of subjectivity. When this happens, the interpreter ignores the obvious and encourages the speculative from arguments of silence. Thus, when the literal sense of God's word is abandoned, it not only makes any interpretation possible, but more than likely probable. Devoid of the anchor which the grammatical-historical method provides, the only question that remains now is, where to next? Doubtlessly, many in churches and denominations, like the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, are currently asking the same question.

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